



DEFENDER OF THE GATE

The Presidio of San Francisco
A History from 1846 to 1995

ERWIN N. THOMPSON

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY, VOLUME I

Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California
National Park Service

July 1997

Cover photo: Presidio of San Francisco, circa 1900-1904. U.S. Army Military History Institute.

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A 1997 map of the Presidio of San Francisco is located inside the back cover of Volume II.

PREFACE

This historic resources study of the Presidio of San Francisco has been undertaken pursuant to the National Park Service's Task Order 14, Contract 1443-CX-2000-93-04, Historic Resources Study — Phase II, Presidio of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, dated August 30, 1993, the National Park Service's Revised Task Order Schedule, dated September 19, 1994, and a Letter of Agreement between Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco, California, and Erwin N. Thompson, Golden, Colorado, dated October 30, 1993.

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Institutions that made their resources available include the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; California Historical Society, San Francisco; California Room, California State Library, Sacramento; California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento; Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association, Presidio of San Francisco; The Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco; San Francisco History Room and Special Collections Department, San Francisco Public Library; Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace Archives, and Cecil H. Green Library, Stanford University; National Japanese Historical Society, San Francisco; University of the Pacific Archives, Stockton; New Jersey Historical Society, Newark; Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder; Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Pacific Sierra Region, National Archives, San Bruno, California, and the National Archives, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; and the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Ann Huppert and Monica Griesbach of Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco, provided book design and layout, and Cathleen Malmström, Takashi Fukuda and Steve Farneth of Architectural Resources Group provided administrative support and direction, along with welcomed encouragement throughout the project. Susan DeRenne Coerr wrote the index for the study. Finally, and first, a special thanks to Joan Huff of Lakewood, Colorado, who, through her magical powers, converted a difficult scrawl into a handsome manuscript, and to Jean Lewis of Alameda, California, whose peerless editing made me appear much more intelligent than I am.

My deep thanks go to all who helped in the preparation of this history of the Presidio of San Francisco.

E.N.T.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This preface describes editorial conventions specific to this study.

The format in the text distinguishes between verbatim quotations and paraphrased information by indenting quotations on the left and right and single spacing them. Paraphrased excerpts are indented on the left side only. Misspellings and other infelicities in quoted material have generally not been noted except to indicate misspelled names and inaccurate or misleading information.

The names of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups used in this report are generally those used by the U.S. military at the times of the events discussed.

Military ranks have been abbreviated when used with full names of individuals. A list of abbreviations of ranks is included after the list of acronyms.

Building numbers at the Presidio have changed often. Where available, the current building numbers are given in brackets (or in some cases the text states that they are current). Numbers for buildings that are no longer extant are given in parentheses or described as former buildings. Some of the Presidio's buildings are scheduled to be demolished by the GGNRA; this is noted in the text where those buildings are discussed. Building numbers are not given for Coast Guard buildings (original Coast Guard buildings 900–999; current buildings numbers 1900–1999). Pictures of these buildings show the buildings' former locations.

Sources of information are cited in the notes that are provided at the ends of chapters. In many cases, all sources of information for a paragraph are listed together in a single note at the end of the paragraph. Acronyms used in the notes are included in the list of acronyms.

A dagger (†) appears after the first occurrence of each word defined in Appendix B, An Abbreviated Military Dictionary.

ACRONYMS

AAA	Antiaircraft Artillery
ADC	Aide-de-camp
AADC	Additional aide-de-camp
AG	Adjutant General
AAG	Assistant Adjutant General
ACP	Appointments, Commissions, and Personal File
AFB	Air Force Base
AGF	Army Ground Forces
AJA	Americans of Japanese Ancestry
AQM	Assistant Quartermaster
AQMG	Assistant Quartermaster General
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
CAC	Coast Artillery Corps
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CCF	Consolidated Correspondence file
CE	Corps of Engineers
CG	Commanding General
CMTC	Citizens Military Training Camps
CO	Commanding Officer
COMBAT	Coalition Opposed to Medical and Biological Attack
DEH	Directorate of Engineering and Housing
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FA	Field Artillery
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAR	Grand Army of the Republic
GCF	General Correspondence File
GCGF	General Correspondence Geographical File
HEW	Department of Health, Education and Welfare
LSS	Life Saving Service/Life Saving Station
M	Microfilm
MARS	Military Affiliate Radio System
MIS	Military Intelligence Service

MISLS	Military Intelligence Service Language School
NA	National Archives
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no publisher; no place
NPS	National Park Service
OCE	Office of the Chief of Engineers
OIC	Officer in Charge
OQMG	Office of the Quartermaster General
PAM	Presidio Army Museum
PSF	Presidio of San Francisco
PX	Post Exchange
PWA	Public Works Administration
QMC	Quartermaster Corps
QMG	Quartermaster General
RA	Regular Army
RG	Record Group
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SCU	Service Command Unit
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USMA	United States Military Academy
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USS	United States Ship
WAC	Women's Army Corps
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WDC	Western Defense Command
WMIR	Western Medical Institute of Research
WPA	Works Projects Administration
WRO	Western Regional Office

ABBREVIATIONS OF MILITARY RANKS

Adj. Gen.	Adjutant General
Adm.	Admiral
Brig. Gen.	Brigadier General
Bvt.	Brevet
Capt.	Captain
Cmdr.	Commander
Cmdre.	Commodore
Col.	Colonel
Cpl.	Corporal
Lt.	Lieutenant
Lt. Col.	Lieutenant Colonel
Lt. Gen.	Lieutenant General
Maj.	Major
Maj. Gen.	Major General
Pvt.	Private
Rear Adm.	Rear Admiral
Rct.	Recruit
Sgt.	Sergeant
Surg.	Surgeon
Vice Adm.	Vice Admiral

INTRODUCTION

Early in the twentieth century an American army officer wrote that the military post on the San Francisco headlands at the Golden Gate, the Presidio of San Francisco, possessed great beauty and probably no other military post in the world had such a magnificent location and commanding position. Even before then, the Presidio's history had been long and varied.

In 1776 Capt. Juan Agustin Bautista de Anza formally took possession of these headlands in the name of the king of Spain. During the winter of 1776-1777, Lt. José Joaquin Moraga oversaw the construction of a military camp in a sheltered vale inland from the headlands and named it the Presidio of San Francisco in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. The garrison's duties included guarding the nearby Mission Dolores and "controlling" the Indians of the area. Its commandant also received instructions to regulate the coming and going of foreign ships, whether they were British, French, Russian, or American.

This coastal presidio marked the northernmost advance of Spain's American empire at a time of intense international rivalry among western powers in the North Pacific. In 1793 Governor José Joaquin Arrillaga ordered the construction of a fortification, Castillo de San Joaquin, about a mile and a half from the Presidio on the northernmost headland that had been named Punta del Cantil Blanco (White Cliff Point), which Americans later named Fort Point. Priests christened and blessed the new work on December 8, 1794. The Spanish viceroy considered its cost of more than 6,000 pesos to be quite a large sum.

In the years that followed, storms and earthquakes attacked the mostly adobe presidio and fort. The small garrison force and Indian laborers made repairs when funds became available. Ignored by the Spanish crown and the viceroy of New Spain, who had their own problems in Europe and in the Americas, the Presidio of San Francisco declined steadily after 1810 despite a spurt in repairs in 1815. With the collapse of Spain's colonial efforts in Mexico in 1821, officials in Upper California, including those at the Presidio, changed their allegiance to the new Mexican government, which, however, paid as little attention to the welfare of the northern colonies as had the viceroy. Then, in 1835, Cmdr. Mariano Vallejo moved the garrison north to Sonoma, leaving a small caretaking detachment at the Presidio.

During the 1830s the village of Yerba Buena, on a cove east of the Presidio and later known as San Francisco, slowly grew in size. Its earliest inhabitants included Europeans, Americans, and Mexicans. In the 1840s the U.S. government became increasingly interested in acquiring Upper California from Mexico. Caucasian residents in the Mexican province, hearing rumors of war, became apprehensive. In May 1846, the United States declared war on the Republic of Mexico.

Even before then, in March, Lt. John C. Fremont of the U.S. Army, leading a military exploring party, entered California from the Oregon Country. American residents, with Fremont's encouragement, "captured" Commander Vallejo (who favored American annexation) in June and declared themselves a republic (this was known as the Bear Flag Rebellion). Fremont then took command of the ragged force and marched toward the Presidio of San Francisco, where his party spiked the cannon in Castillo de San Joaquin. (The bronze gun *San Pedro* in front of the officers' club still had the Fremont party's spike in its touchhole in 1995.) About the same time Cmdre. John D. Sloat of the U.S. Navy captured the California capital of Monterey and officially raised the U.S. flag over California.

For nearly 150 years the U.S. Army maintained a garrison at the Presidio. In the beginning the number of soldiers remained small, especially when the California gold rush tempted the men to desert. Nevertheless, the army post in San Francisco Bay established a federal presence in the new territory during the period of military government and afterward. Officers surveyed the area and recommended boundaries for military reservations. From time to time the garrison marched out and attempted to settle differences between miners and Indians. A Spanish/Mexican adobe from the old regime evolved into an officers' club and remnants of the ancient structure still reside within the walls of the present building.

With the coming of the Civil War, the Presidio's strength exploded to more than 1,500 soldiers who manned the harbor defenses, marched east and south to quell secessionists, and assisted in maintaining order among the growing populations in the Bay Area. In the 1870s and beyond, Presidio troops played a role in the Indian Wars in the West, suffering significant casualties in the Modoc War especially.

Beginning with the large masonry Fort Point in the 1860s, artillery troops manned the Presidio's and Fort Winfield Scott's coastal batteries through the Spanish-American War, World War I, and a large array of weapons in World War II. Fort Scott also served as the head-

quarters for all the coastal defenses of the Bay Area, from Point Reyes in the north to San Luis Obispo Bay in the south.

Between 1847 and 1941, the Presidio's garrison included other combat troops in addition to the Coast Artillery Corps. Infantry, cavalry, and field artillery trained and went forth to duty when called. During the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, thousands of volunteers and regular troops mustered at the Presidio prior to going overseas. Cavalry troopers guarded the national parks in California. An infantry brigade, organized at the Presidio, guarded the troubled border with Mexico from 1914 to 1916. Following the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 and World War I, Presidio's soldiers took part in the Siberian Expedition during the Russian Revolution to rescue a Czech army from the Bolsheviks. Beautification of the reservation became an important element in the planning of the 1880s and subsequent years, resulting in the forests and glens of the twentieth century that make the reservation a place of magnificent vistas and quiet charm.

For a decade in the 1870s and 1880s, the Presidio served as the headquarters of the Military Division of the Pacific and the Department of California. For a short time following the 1906 Earthquake, at which time the Presidio assisted the city in its great disaster and provided camps for refugees, army headquarters returned to the post, their city offices having been destroyed. In 1920, the Army's western headquarters returned to the Presidio permanently. During World War II, the Western Defense Command assumed responsibility for the defense of the west coast. The Presidio now became the nerve center for army operations in the defense of the western United States, including, for a time, Alaska. In 1941 the Fourth Army Intelligence School at the Presidio taught Japanese American soldiers Japanese military terminology. Graduates of this school contributed significantly to American successes in Pacific battles. The school eventually grew into the nation's Defense Language Institute at Monterey, California. Following the war, the Sixth U.S. Army headquartered in the huge barracks on the main parade, assumed responsibility for the Army's operations in the western third of the United States and by the 1970s the western half of the United States.

The Presidio of San Francisco accommodated a variety of other missions over the years. Beginning with the Civil War, the Army established a cemetery west of the main post. In 1884 it became the San Francisco National Cemetery, containing the remains of the famous and the unknown, generals, admirals, privates, seamen, U.S. Marines, and soldiers reinterred there from western Indian Wars, battlefields, and the cemeteries of abandoned frontier army posts.

In 1890 the Treasury Department established the Fort Point Life Saving Station in Lower Presidio. Its role became ever more important, and it eventually became the sole such station in the Bay Area until the U.S. Coast Guard replaced it with a new station at Fort Baker in Marin County in 1990.

Near the southwest corner of the Presidio's 1,440 acres stood the Marine Hospital. Moved there in 1875, it provided medical care for merchant seamen of all nations who were stranded on San Francisco's shores. The main building, constructed in 1932, provided such care until its closure in 1981. Beginning with the Spanish-American War, the Army's Letterman General Hospital, near the reservation's northeast corner, became one of the most important army medical institutions in the nation. In World War II it became the principal mainland hospital for the reception of all the wounded and sick from the Pacific Theater. In the last year of the war, 1945, no fewer than 72,000 patients passed through Letterman. Daily hospital trains carried them on to other destinations across the nation.

One of the more colorful tenants of the reservation, the fledgling Air Service of the U.S. Army, established Crissy Field in the Lower Presidio in 1921. This early army airfield undertook a variety of missions, including assisting the Coast Artillery Corps in the training of its gun crews, publicizing the glamour of flying in those early years of flight, assisting in fighting forest fires in California, providing aerial photographs of west coast cities and geographical features, and its most unusual mission was to fly archeologists over the southwest deserts while they recorded prehistoric irrigation systems and ancient transportation routes. Construction of the magnificent Golden Gate Bridge in the 1930s brought an end to Crissy Field's use as an airfield, and had general impacts on the Presidio as well.

The generations of Army Blue that passed through the Presidio's gates have left posterity a fascinating history of a strategic, important, and glorious old army post.

CHAPTER 1. SAN FRANCISCO BAY, 1842–1849

American Occupation

As the 1840s unfolded, the possibility of war with Mexico became more evident in Washington's official circles. The United States considered the ramifications of annexing Texas while Mexico refused to pay its debts. The doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" (the possession of the continent with Providence's blessing) spread among the American people. In 1842 Cmdre. Thomas ap C. Jones prematurely seized Monterey, the Mexican capital of Alta California, when he mistakenly believed the United States and Mexico were at war. An embarrassed Jones promptly withdrew with profuse apologies when he learned of his error. But a fortune-teller could easily have predicted the near future as relations between the two nations grew worse.

On May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. In early June Cmdre. John D. Sloat, commander of the U.S. Pacific Squadron, learned of the declaration and sailed for Monterey. American forces took possession of the capital on July 7, 1846. Two days later Cmdr. John D. Montgomery, USS *Portsmouth*, landed Marines at Yerba Buena in San Francisco Bay.¹

Spanish forces had occupied San Francisco Bay in 1776, having discovered the magnificent harbor in 1769. José Joaquín Moraga arrived from the Presidio of Monterey with nearly 200 soldiers and settlers. On September 17, 1776, padres blessed the new Presidio of San Francisco. Located on the southern side of the bay, the Presidio eventually consisted of a large enclosure of adobe walls. Barracks, officers' quarters, chapels, storerooms, and guardhouse†, all of adobe, lined the walls and enclosed an open plaza. John Langellier describes a presidio as a military and civil complex and explains that, "derived from the Latin term *presidium*, a fortified or garrisoned place, the Spanish presidio acted as the advance guard of territorial settlement. In addition to its martial service, it provided the core of governmental, social, and economic activity in the region." At the time of the American conquest, four presidios protected Alta California: San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco.²

A few years later the Spaniards completed a large battery, the Castillo de San Joaquín, at Punta del Cantil Blanco (White Cliff Point; today's Fort Point), the prominent headland guarding the entrance to the bay and about 1 mile northwest of the Presidio. It consisted of



Mexican flag flying over the Presidio of San Francisco, 1826. Drawing by Capt. W. Smyth, British Royal Navy. National Archives.

an adobe and brick work with embrasures† for a number of cannon. To the rear of the curved parapet† was a wooden platform or esplanade on which the guns and their carriages stood. A barracks, sentry box, mess† room, and powder magazine† to the rear completed the work. The number of guns, mounted and dismounted, varied over the years, typical of such works in all armies.³

Spanish dominion in the New World collapsed in 1821 and Mexico assumed control of Alta California. Neglected by the new authorities, the presidios in Alta California declined greatly in the size of their garrisons and their armament. Finally, in 1835, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, commandant of the northern frontier, removed his troops from the Presidio to Sonoma north of the bay. He left Alferez Juan Prado Mesa and six artillerymen at the San Francisco Presidio. Later he withdrew even that remnant, and Cpl. Joaquin Peña ("Pina") remained behind as custodian.⁴

When Lt. Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Navy, commander of a naval scientific expedition to the South Seas, visited the Presidio in 1841, he wrote:

After passing the entrance, we were scarcely able to distinguish the Presidio; and had it not been for its solitary flag-staff, we could not have ascertained its situation. From this staff no flag floated; the building was deserted, the walls had fallen to decay, the guns were dismounted, and everything around it lay in quiet. We were not even saluted by the stentorian lungs of some soldier, so customary in Spanish places....I afterwards learned that the Presidio was still a garrison in name, and that it had not been wholly abandoned; but the remnant of the troops stationed there consisted of no more than an officer and one soldier. I was not able to learn the rank of the former, as he was absent and appeared, at least among the foreigners, to be little known.⁵

Thus, the Presidio and its defenses lay practically deserted when Sloat raised the Stars and Stripes over California's domain.

John Charles Fremont

Before the capture of Monterey another American, Lt. John Charles Fremont of the U.S. Army Corps† of Topographical Engineers†, made his presence in California known to Mexican authorities. He had led an exploring expedition into California in 1844, and in December 1845 he arrived at Sutter's Fort (within Sacramento today) with a party of 62 men. Before he left the United States, Fremont had received orders that should war have begun before he reached California, he was to change his mission from exploration to combat. Finding the country at peace, Fremont sought approval for his presence from Commandant José Castro at Monterey. Once he had acquired fresh horses and the necessary supplies, he declared, he would depart for the United States. When Castro directed him to leave the province at once, Fremont first decided to bluster a bit but changed his mind and headed toward the Oregon Country.

U.S. Marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie, recently arrived from the United States, caught up with Fremont, apparently with secret orders from Washington. Fremont turned around and retraced his steps southward. On learning that the Castillo de San Joaquin was deserted, or nearly so, Fremont decided to cross the strait and render its guns useless. He contacted William D. Phelps, captain of the American trading vessel *Moscow* anchored off Sausalito. Phelps lent him one of his boats for the endeavor. Describing the July 1, 1846, event many years later, Fremont wrote:

I took with me twelve of my men singled out as the best shots....The captain happened to have on board his ship a quantity of rattail files, with some of which we supplied ourselves. I had learned that little or no guard was maintained at the fort....Pulling across the strait...we reached the Fort Point [a later name] in the gray dawn of morning and scrambled up the steep bank just in time to see several horsemen escaping at full speed toward Yerba Buena. We promptly spiked the guns — fourteen — nearly all long brass Spanish pieces. The work of spiking was effectually done by Stepp, who was a gunsmith.⁶

Captain Phelps maintained a diary in which he recorded the action:

I concluded it would be best to render what assistance I could....Selecting a dozen of Butchers Steels [knife sharpeners that look like rattail files] from the trade room, a few hammers, hat chets and crowbars, the preparations were soon made and expecting some opposition about 20 men 6 of whom were Delawares, were selected and stowed away in the Launch and armed with Rifles and Pistols — the Delawares with tomahawks. Capt. Fremont requested me to accompany them as Pilot. Therefore I followed him and Mr. Gillespie into the boat and with a boats crew of my own men the compliment was about 26 persons. We returned to the Ship in less than two hours having accomplished all that was intended spiking 3 Brass and 7 Iron Guns without seeing a foe.⁷

Like Fremont, Phelps prepared his memoirs many years later. He wrote:

The boat was anchored about a quarter of a mile inside of Fort Point, just without the brakers. One of my men swam on shore with a rope, and the boat was hauled as near in as possible, when all but the boats crew were ordered to jump overboard and scramble on shore as best they could. Between the landing place and the fort a number of gullies or ravines intervened, over which I had to pick my way with some caution.⁸

Phelps did not reach the castillo until after the guns had been dismounted. Others in the party included Christopher (Kit) Carson, not yet an army officer, and Lieutenant Gillespie. As to the number of cannon the party spiked, there is some confusion. While Fremont counted 14 in his memoirs, in a letter to his father-in-law, U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton, written soon after the event, he claimed only "six large and handsome pieces." A naval officer who visited the castillo soon after counted 10 guns. Hubert Howe Bancroft, who derided Fremont in his histories, also settled on 10, saying that not one of them "offered the slightest resistance."⁹

Until the 1840s the entrance to San Francisco Bay had been called the "Boca del Puerto de San Francisco" (Entrance to the Port of San Francisco). Sometime in the 1840s, however, the entrance acquired a new name. In his memoirs, Fremont wrote about his publicity coup, "To this Gate I gave the name of *Chrysopylae*, or GOLDEN GATE; for the same reasons that the harbor of Byzantium (Constantinople afterwards) was called *Chrysoceras*, or GOLDEN HORN."¹⁰

Lieutenant Fremont went on to participate in more significant episodes in the acquisition of California. For a brief period — two months — he became the de facto governor of the newly acquired province. In later years, California became his and Mrs. Fremont's home.¹¹

Military Government

Comodore Sloat's appearance at Monterey on July 7, 1846, brought a swift end to the Bear Flaggers' hope for a California republic. Two weeks later he turned over command of the Pacific Squadron to Cmdre. Robert F. Stockton who arrived on USS *Congress*. Determined to bring all California under the sovereignty of the United States, he named himself temporary governor. In December 1846 Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny, marching overland from his victory at Santa Fe, arrived in California. Feuding with Stockton (which led to the arrest and court martial of Fremont), Kearny arrived at Monterey in February 1847. Stockton had already departed the port and his naval successors recognized Kearny as the commanding officer of American forces in California. He took charge as governor on February 9 and established a stable military government.

Yerba Buena

When Cmdr. John D. Montgomery arrived at San Francisco Bay in July 1846, he dispatched a message to William A. Leidesdorf, the American vice-consul and the leading merchant in the hamlet of Yerba Buena:

July 8, 1846: At 1/2 past seven oclock to morrow morning I propose landing a considerable body of men under arms. And to march them from the boats to the flag staff in Yerba Buena, upon which at 8 oclock, I shall hoist the Flag of the U States under a salute of twenty one guns from the Portsmouth. After which, the Proclamation of the Commander in Chief Commander Sloat will be read in both languages for the enformation of all classes.¹²

True to Montgomery's word, Lt. Paul W. Revere of the U.S. Navy landed with 70 sailors and marines on July 9. They raised the U.S. flag in the plaza (later, Portsmouth Square), and the ship's guns fired a national salute. Most of the male population (foreigners and Mexicans) of the 500-person village attended the ceremony although there was no Mexican official present to offer a surrender. A 24-man detail, led by Lt. H. B. Watson of the U.S. Marine Corps, remained on shore and converted the adobe custom house to a barracks. Also on that day, Lt. Jonathan S. Misroon of the U.S. Navy, led a small detachment the 3 miles to the Presidio and its castillo. At the latter, which the Americans called "the fort," he inspected the guns that Fremont had spiked:

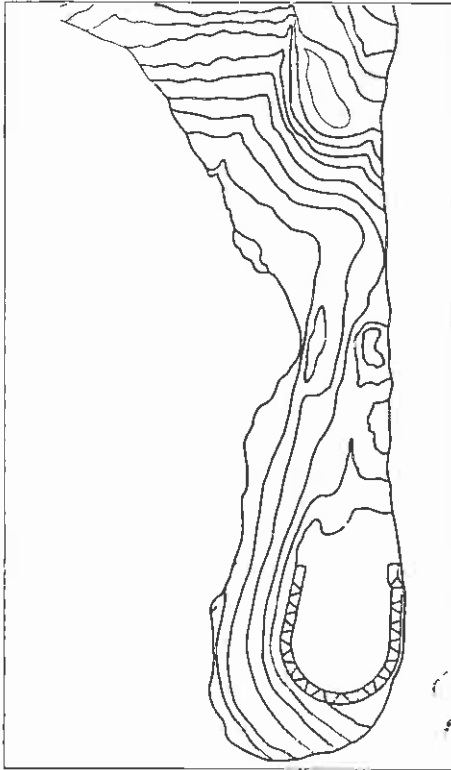
Calling on our way at the Presidio, where I had understood that one or more cannon were mounted; no cannon, however, were found there, and it is certain that they have been lately removed; nor were there any of the usual residents there.

At the castillo he saw "three brass guns (12s and 18s [pounders], old Sp[anish] pieces made in 1623 [1673] 1628 & 1693, besides three long iron 42s, and 4 smaller guns." Misroon raised the American flag over the castillo before returning to Yerba Buena. Joseph Downey, a sailor in Misroon's party, also described the castillo:

The Old fort at the mouth of the Harbor, was in a ruinous state, but there were in it some valuable pieces of ordnance†, (which however were most unfortunately all spiked) that only required drilling out and remounting to be very formidable. We could, at a very small outlay of Labor, have repaired the Old Fort, but to man it would require more men than we could spare.¹³

In the days following the occupation Montgomery's forces erected a battery of five guns in Yerba Buena. It was sited on a steep bluff where Battery Street and Broadway would later intersect. An early San Francisco newspaper later recounted, "the guns from the old fort, which had been spiked by the Fremont party, were to be brought up, drilled out, and constitute the armament...boats under the charge of Dave Bruce, the sail maker, were ordered to dismount the guns at the fort and bring them to the landing." Troops named the new work "Fort Montgomery" in honor of the *Portsmouth's* captain.¹⁴

Affairs at Yerba Buena remained calm through the summer and fall of 1846. Stockton appointed Lt. Washington A. Bartlett of the U.S. Navy the first American alcalde (mayor) of the village. He changed the name of the settlement to San Francisco in January 1847. General



Castillo De San Joaquin at Fort Point. Drawing by Lt. William H. Warner, U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1847. National Archives.

Kearny, traveling on *Cyane*, visited in February. A citizen, Edwin Bryant, accompanied the general on a ride out to the Presidio. He described it as consisting "of several blocks of adobe buildings, covered with tiles," and wrote that "The walls of most of the buildings are crumbling for the want of care in protecting them from the annual rains." Continuing on, the party came to the old castillo:

The fort is erected upon a commanding position, about a mile and a half from the entrance to the bay. Its walls are substantially constructed of burnt brick, and are of sufficient thickness and strength to resist heavy battering.

There are nine or ten embrasures. Like every thing else in the country belonging to the public, the fort is fast falling into ruins. There has been no garrison here for several years; the guns are dismounted, and half decomposed by exposure to the weather, and from want of care. Some of them have sunk into the ground.

General Kearny, back at his headquarters at Monterey, wrote in a more positive note:

I have directed the old Spanish fort at the entrance of the bay of San Francisco to be put in good order, and guns to be mounted there; it will be a barbette† battery. Its position is a highly important one, as no vessel can enter without passing under its guns, the distance from it to the shore being less than one mile; the work will cost but a few thousand dollars.¹⁵

In August 1846 a ship from New York brought 50 migrating Mormon families (230 men, women, and children) to the port; they were utterly disappointed to learn that California was American territory. Captain Phelps boarded the vessel to see the newcomers, "They appeared to belong to the middling class of people — mostly mechanics and farmers." Some of the local inhabitants voiced intense curiosity about the new arrivals. Stories of polygamy had led to an image that Mormons "were a wild, desperate people." But when they boarded *Plymouth* to attend a church service, a ship's gunner growled, "Damnation! Why they are just like other women."¹⁶

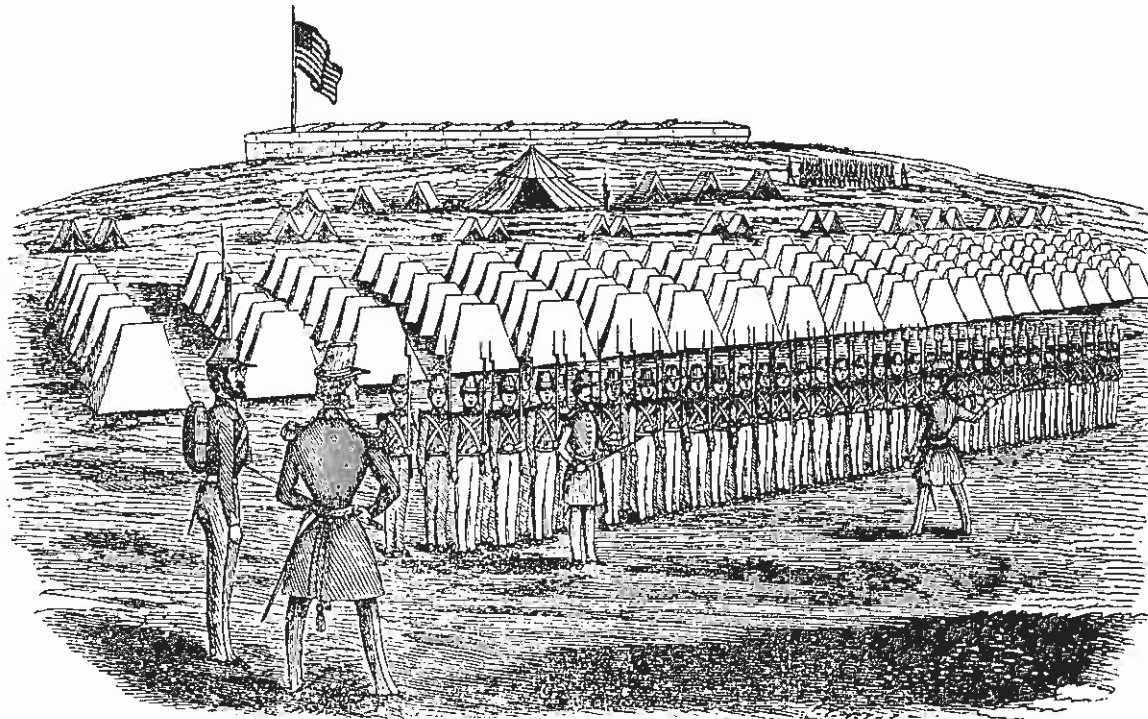
New York Volunteers

At the beginning of the war with Mexico, the U.S. Congress authorized the raising of 50,000 volunteers to serve for 12 months or for the duration of the war. It also authorized President James K. Polk to apportion field, staff, and general officers† for the volunteers among the states.¹⁷ In New York, as elsewhere, the state began the formation of the volunteer units. Secretary of War William L. Marcy directed Jonathan D. Stevenson, New York City, to organize and command the 7th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment.†¹⁸

A number of officers appointed to the regiment were Regular Army† men who had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. Among these was James A. Hardie, a second lieutenant at the beginning of the war who was promoted to temporary major in the volunteers. He had graduated from West Point in 1843 and joined the 1st Artillery Regiment. Hardie became the first American post commander at the Presidio of San Francisco.¹⁹

Other West Point graduates assigned to the regiment included Colonel Stevenson's son, Matthew Rider, Henry S. Burton, Joseph L. Folsom, and John E. Brackett. In addition to the line officers were the Reverend Thaddeus M. Leavenworth, chaplain, and three surgeons: Alexander Perry, Robert Murray, and William C. Parker. Samuel W. Haight became sutler† (trader).

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE NEW YORK LEGION, OR THE CALIFORNIA REGIMENT,
ON GOVERNOR'S ISLAND, IN NEW YORK HARBOR.



Shown here just before embarking by ship for Alta California in 1846, the "New York Legion" or the "California Regiment" was organized along legionary lines, predominately infantry but with components of cavalry and artillery. The unit became better known as the 7th New York Volunteers, later designated the First New York Volunteers. The unit had a unique uniform, especially the caps. *From the New York Herald, August 10, 1846.*

The Army mustered in the regiment on August 1 on Governors Island in New York Harbor. The 10 companies trained at their new profession during the summer of 1846. Stevenson formed a regimental band and the City of New York presented a full set of regimental colors. The soldiers appear to have been proud of their uniforms that Major Hardie designed: pantaloons of dark, mixed gray with a scarlet stripe on the seam of the leg, blue coats with scarlet trimmings, and a "new" style of French cap. In September the first segment of troops boarded three ships, *Thomas H. Perkins*, *Susan Drew*, and *Loo Choo*. The balance of the regiment did not sail until later aboard *Brutus*, *Isabella*, and *Sweden*. Also sailing in September, U.S. Storeship *Lexington* carried Company F, Third Artillery, heading also for California. Two of its young officers would rise to fame: Lt. William Tecumseh Sherman and Lt. E. O. C. Ord. Lt. Henry W. Halleck of the Engineer Corps also on board, would return to California as a major general.

An enlisted man assigned to the regiment, James Lynch, wrote his reminiscences many years later when a California resident. He boarded *Thomas H. Perkins* on which Colonel Stevenson had taken passage. Lynch recalled some incidents concerning the long voyage. At first everyone on board became seasick. The ship reached Rio de Janeiro on November 20. The quartermaster's wife gave birth. Another woman died. The ship reached San Francisco Bay on March 5, 1847. Both *Susan Drew* and *Loo Choo* arrived later the same month.²⁰

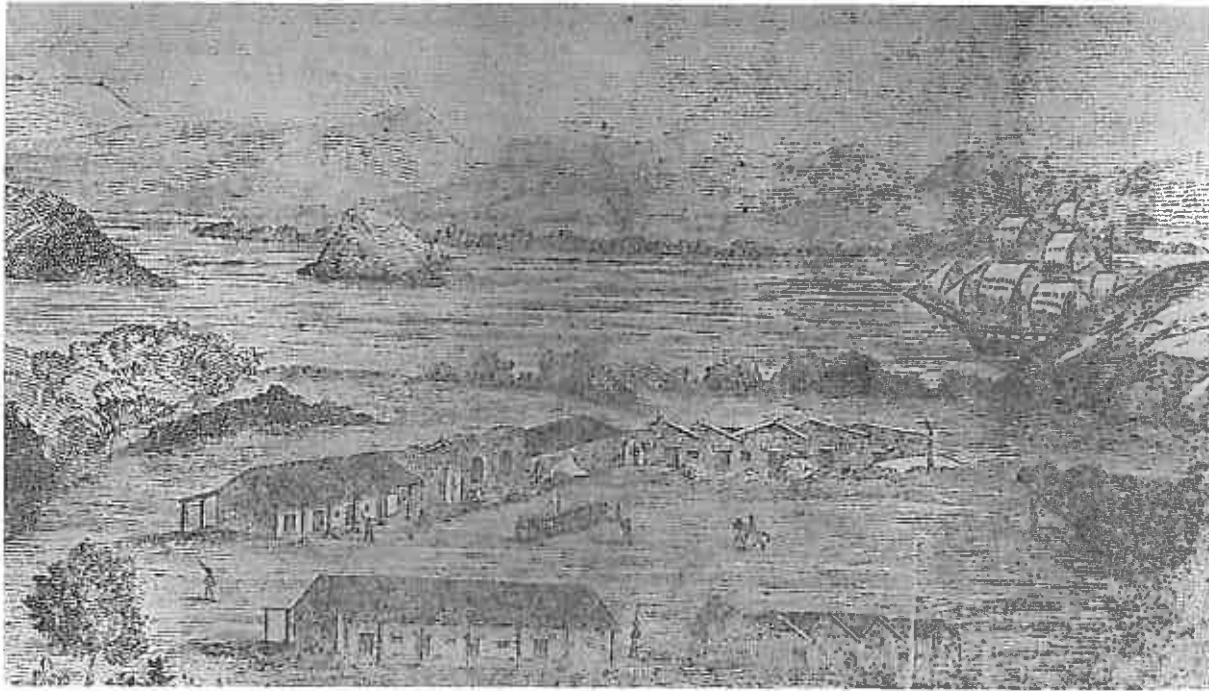
Private Lynch described the regiment's arrival. It marched the 3 miles to the Presidio, "where we found the old Mexican barracks in rather a dilapidated condition; but in a few days we made quite a change in it, and were the first to hoist the Stars and Stripes over that old Mexican post. We settled down to drill, guard, and police duty." He added, "While we were quartered at the Presidio, John C. Fremont came to visit our commander. He was the first man I ever saw with his hair parted in the middle."

Stevenson informed General Kearny that the command was hard at work repairing Presidio structures, constructing kitchens, and improving the trail to Yerba Buena. Col. Richard Mason at Monterey took a more critical stance:

It is found impossible to get much work out of the volunteers; and all that I can now expect of the two companies of Major Hardie's command will be to improve their quarters....This they are at present engaged upon, using lumber made at the horse saw-mill, under direction of assistant quartermaster, Captain Folsom.

The mill is placed in the timber known as the Red Woods, near the mission of San Rafael, on the west and north side of the bay, where any amount may be had.²¹

The Presidio's first "Post Return," prepared at the end of March 1847, included statistical data for the War Department's files. Rather than stating that the regiment had arrived at the Presidio, it said that a detachment of the regiment was at San Francisco, California. This information showed that the name of the town had changed from Yerba Buena to San Francisco (January 1847), that only a part of the regiment had yet arrived (seven of the 10 companies), and that the War Department had not yet published orders giving the post a name. Of the 28 officers present, three were sick and three were under arrest. The number of enlisted men present came to 384.²²



Earliest known drawing of the American Presidio of San Francisco. New roofs appear to have been constructed. The building on the lower left is believed to be the future Presidio officers' club, 50. View toward the north. *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*

In April the companies dispersed throughout California. Colonel Stevenson embarked with four companies for Monterey on April 3, and Capt. John E. Brackett led his Company C to Sonoma on April 2. That left Companies H and K at the Presidio under the command of Major Hardie. Capt. John B. Frisbie commanded Company H and Capt. Kimball H. Dimmick, Company K. On April 17 Hardie received a reinforcement of three officers and 47 men. At the end of the month the command consisted of seven officers and 118 men. From then until the volunteers mustered out in 1848, the Presidio's strength varied from six to eight officers and from 75 to 110 men.

Company H had been raised at Albany, New York, under Captain Frisbie. His two junior officers, Lieutenants Edward Gilbert and John S. Day, also served at the Presidio. Norwich, New York, raised Company K and Captain Dimmick was assisted by Lieutenants John S. Norris, George C. Hubbard, and Roderick N. Morrison. Also at San Francisco, Capt. Joseph L. Folsom, the regimental quartermaster and commissary† (supplies and food), maintained his office and living quarters in the town, appearing on the post returns only for accounting purposes.²³

Of these officers, only Hardie and Folsom had careers in the Regular Army. Folsom had graduated from West Point in 1840 as an infantry officer. Promoted to captain just before coming to California, he remained in that grade and in the Bay Area until his death in 1855, well after the volunteers had mustered out. Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny designated San Francisco to be the principal supply depot for the Pacific coast with Folsom in charge. Upon his arrival, Folsom organized this first depot. He rented two storehouses and an office in the town, while soldiers and canvas protected large amounts of army supplies on the waterfront. With the coming of the gold rush, San Francisco eventually became too expensive for the Army and the depot moved to Benicia in April 1849. In addition to his military duties, Captain Folsom invested in California real estate, as did many other officers. On one occasion he urged Capt. William Tecumseh Sherman, the Army's adjutant general† in California, to purchase some San Francisco lots. Sherman refused to invest his money "in such a horrid place." Folsom, while remaining on active duty, continued to invest and became a rich man. Eventually he purchased the estate of the pioneer merchant William Leidesdorf and became one of the wealthiest men in California. He died young, age 38, at the Mission San Jose. At one point in his San Francisco career, Folsom penned a description of the old Spanish works:

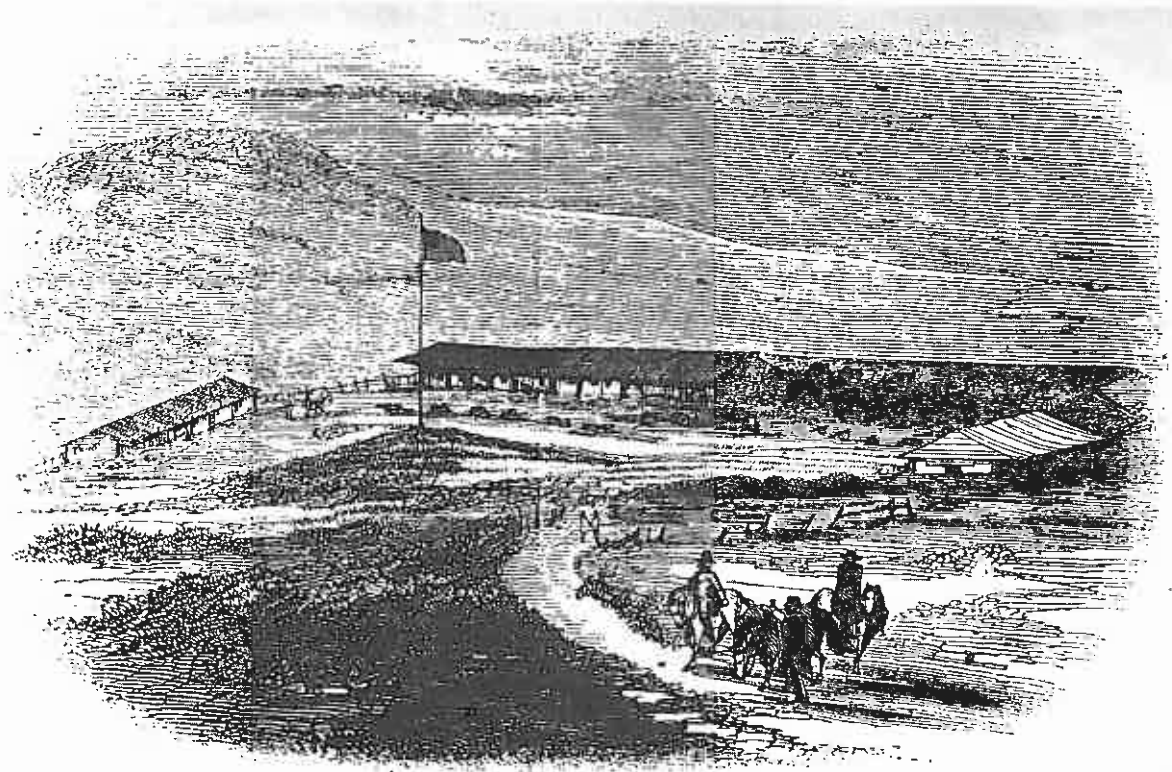
The old fort, at the narrows, was built and has guns mounted upon it for the last seventy or eighty years [1767-1777], it being the only work commanding the entrance to the bay.

The presidio or barracks hard by were built thirty five years since [1812, an earthquake year], by the Mexican soldiery, and have been occupied by a Mexican garrison for upwards of thirty years, they being the only quarters for troops on this side of the bay. It is but four or five years since the military commandant resided here; and, even at this moment, one or more old Mexican soldiers continue to reside there.²⁴

Stevenson's regiment underwent a name change in November 1847, from the 7th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment to the 1st New York. (Another 1st New York served deep in Mexico; it became the 2d.)

Captain Dimmick maintained a diary while at the Presidio. Some of his entries offer an insight to the daily routine at the post:

Saturday, April 22, 1848. Been sick all day with the teeth ache and taken calomel, etc.



Presidio of San Francisco, 1850. The building on the left became the front portion of today's officers' club, 50. The building behind the flagstaff eventually became three officers' quarters, no longer extant. *From Illustrated California News, September 15, 1850. Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*

Sunday, April 23. This morning Dr. [William C.] Parker attempted to pull two teeth and broke them both off well down out of sight in the goumb.

April 25. W. A. Leidsdorff gave a Ball all the officers attended except myself.

May 1. Maj. Hardie took room at the Presidio and assumed the command of the Northern Military District of California. [Parallel to Colonel Stevenson's command of the southern district. Hardie turned over command of the post to Captain Frisbie.]

May 2. Went to the town of San Francisco....Duels & rumors of Duels are the orders of the Day.

May 3. Orders received from Monterey for Capt. Brackett with C Company to embark on the Bark Anita together with Maj. Hardie and proceed to San Jose in lower California. [Temporary duty. Company C continued to be assigned to Sonoma.]

May 7. Detailed to take charge of the working party to repair the old Fort and mount the Guns in Battery.²⁵

May 8. Dr Parker took quarters with me in my room.

May 9. Worked on the road between the fort and Presidio.

May 16. Lieut [William H.] Warner is commence the survey of the military reserve on which stands this presidio.

May 17. Myself Dr. Parker made arrangements to pay Lt. [George C.] Hubbards debts which amount to \$250 more than his pay due from government. He agrees to not drink or Spree it any more while in the Service.

May 18. This morning died Capt. Leidsdorff.

May 19. The funeral of Capt. Leidsdorff to take place at the Mission of Dolores. A salute of Guns were fired at the Presidio by order of Capt [Frisbie] rather out of character.

May 21. Received news from Monterey that the president [Polk] of the U.S. has been impeached. It is not believed.

May 22. Commenced work again on the fort.

May 23. Worked upon the Fort all day.

May 28. Last night about 18 men deserted for the purpose of working in the gold mines none of them from my company.

June 2. Rode down the coast about a mile below the Seal Rocks. Saw a whale nearly whole washed on shore by a recent gale.

June 3. Working party on the Fort broke up.

June 5. Capt. Frisbie with one officer 2 non com Officer and eight men went to Sacramento in pursuit of deserters, Lieut Hubbard in arrest for disobedience of Frisbies orders.

June 8. Maj. Hardie arrived from Sonoma and published orders assigning the command of this Post to my charge.

June 11. Capt [John E.] Brackett arrived with his company [C] from Sonoma – had but 23 men the others deserted and went to the gold mines.

June 17. Arrested 10 deserters from Co. C and confined them in the Guard House.

June 21. Gov [Richard B.] Mason arrived from Monterey.

June 23. Two men — Ruggles & Rodrian were flogged for Desertion.²⁶

June 25. Received two letters from home — one from E. B. Dimmick and the other from my mother. Joy. Joy. Joy.

June 27. Walked from the Presidio to the City and Back again.

June 28. Countersign Harrison.

June 29. Maj. Jim Hardie assumed command of this post and government horses for his Spanish [w]hores to ride out to see him.

July 1. Visited the town in forenoon. Killed a coyota at Wilsons on my way.

July 4. Federal Salute at Sunrise & National Salute at noon.

July 10. Sent my quarterly ordnance report to Washington and wrote to Col Stevenson appointing T O'Neil a corporal in my company.

July 22. Went out hunting. Shot four quail and two Rabits.

July 26. Wrote my 29th letter to my wife.

July 29. Wrote to town. bought cloth for one pair pants. Heard that Capt Bracket had resigned.

July 30. Maj. Hardie goes every Sabbath to the Heathen Catholic Church. He is now called by the soldiers the "Pious Papist."²⁷

August 1. Twelve Deserters flogged 49 lashes each. Capt Frisbie compy left the Presidio. [to Sonoma]

August 10. Glorious News of Peace received and an order to discharge the 1st N.Y. Regt.

August 14. Prepared my muster Rolls preparatory to being mustered from the U.S. Service.

August 15. This day at 10 A.M. my company was discharged the service."

August 17. My baggage was moved from the Presidio to San Francisco.

August 24. My company was paid off by Maj Rich and no allowance for travelling expenses.²⁸

September 18. Took my baggage on board the Sloop bound up the Sacramento.

September 20. Arrived at Suttors Fort at 2 P.M.

September 26. Sold goods all day to Indians & Spaniards.²⁹

During August 1848 Major Hardie mustered out the three companies: C and K on August 15 and H from Sonoma on August 25. Other units also mustered out that month at Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Monterey. The regiment had served well on the far frontier during the war with Mexico, not as fighting men but as soldiers of the occupation. Most of the complement remained in California during the heady days of the gold rush and beyond. Some became desperadoes in the booming city of San Francisco; others became distinguished citizens in California. In their various ways they participated in the creation of a new state for the Union.

The Regular Army and the Presidio

Even before the volunteers returned to civilian life, Governor Mason at Monterey wrote, "Two companies of regulars, every day diminished by desertions that cannot be prevented, will soon be the only military force in California; and they will be of necessity compelled to remain in San Francisco and Monterey to guard the large deposits of powder and munitions of war, which cannot be removed." He said that enlisted men got only \$7 a month while they could earn \$10 to 20 a day at the mines.³⁰

When Hardie mustered out the last of the volunteers, he received the first of their replacements, a detachment of 20 men of the First U.S. Dragoon[†] Regiment who came from army headquarters at Monterey. Their commander, Lt. George Stoneman, helped Hardie hold the tiny command together even while the men attempted to head for the mines.³¹

In October Hardie himself was mustered out of the volunteers. He remained the commanding officer of the Presidio, but now as a lieutenant in the 3d U.S. Artillery Regiment. The Presidio's strength that month amounted to four officers and 13 dragoons. Colonel Mason, pleased with Hardie's wartime performance, wrote that he "has effectually aided the civil authorities, dispelled the fears of the threatened Indian incursions, and guarded the heavy

depot at San Francisco — duties which were performed to the best advantage with the limited force at his command.”³²

The dragoons continued to man the post until May 1848. In January, however, Dragoon Capt. Andrew Jackson “Whiskey” Smith replaced Hardie as commander when Smith and his Company C arrived from Los Angeles. On May 1 the dragoons departed the Presidio and in their place came Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes and his Company M, 3d Artillery Regiment. This organization became the first of the artillery regiments to serve at the Presidio for the next 63 years, until the establishment of Fort Winfield Scott, an artillery post in the western portion of the military reservation, in 1912.³³

In the two years since the war with Mexico began, the Army had established a military government in Upper California and an army garrison had occupied the ancient Presidio adjacent to rapidly growing San Francisco, already the most important place in the former province. In the coming decade, Captain Keyes and dedicated officers like him would begin the process of establishing the Presidio, along with Alcatraz Island, as the primary source of strength for the defense of San Francisco Bay.

Chapter 1 Notes:

1. Theodore Grivas, *Military Governments in California, 1846–1850* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1963), pp. 41–45.
2. John P. Langellier and Daniel B. Rosen, *Historic Resource Study, El Presidio de San Francisco, A History under Spain and Mexico, 1776–1846* (Denver: National Park Service (NPS), 1992), p. 11. This is the definitive history of the Spanish/Mexican Presidio of San Francisco. It sheds a bright light on the otherwise cloudy history of the Presidio’s first 70 years. Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio, Bastion of the Spanish Borderland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975) does not discuss coastal presidios in his otherwise excellent study.
3. Langellier, *El Presidio*, pp. 41–42, 57, and 99–100.
4. “Records of the Quartermaster Department, Presidio of San Francisco,” p. 2, in [Gordon Chappell], *The Presidio of San Francisco, 1776–1976, A Collection of Historical Source Materials* (San Francisco, 1976, p. 32). Mesa Street at the Presidio was named in the lieutenant’s honor.
5. Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842*, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, 1844), 5:162–163. In 1848 the Presidio commanding officer wrote to the military governor of California concerning one “Pina,” “an old Mexican soldier who had lived for many years at the Presidio ...but who has lately been disposed of his residence there in consequence of the Government’s requiring the house he occupied for officer’s quarters....He begs permission to pass his effects and cattle (they are but few) across the bay in a public launch.” Captain Hardie had offered Pina a house at the Mission but the old soldier declined. He said the Mexican government had done him wrong and he had not received pay for many years. He would like now to live at San Rafael. Monterey approved Pina’s request and directed that the public launch transport the old

man, his family, and effects across the bay. National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 77, Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE), Consolidated Correspondence File (CCF), Presidio of San Francisco (PSF), Maj. Charles A. Hardie, February 28, 1848, to Col. R. B. Mason, Governor of California; and Lt. William T. Sherman, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters, Military Department, Monterey, March 9, 1848, to Capt. Joseph L. Folsom, Assistant Quartermaster, San Francisco.

6. John Charles Fremont, *Memoirs of My Life* (Chicago: Belford, Clark, 1887), pp. 525–526.

7. Briton Cooper Busch, editor, *Fremont's Private Navy, The 1846 Journal of Captain William Dane Phelps* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1987), pp. 35–36.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 36, n. 14. Phelps later billed the U.S. government \$10,000 for his trouble. A claims court awarded him \$50.

9. Allan Nevins, *Fremont, Pathfinder of the West*, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1939; reprinted 1961), 1:278; Mary Lee Spence and Donald Jackson, editors, *The Bear Flag Revolt and the Court Martial*, vol. 2 in *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 2:183; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California*, 5 vols. (San Francisco: History Company, 1886), 5:177 (Col.) Fred B. Rogers, "Fort Point, California," 1959, Thesis, manuscript (MS), copy at the Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association, PSF.

10. Fremont, *Memoirs*, p. 512. "Chrysopylae or Golden Gate" appeared on a map at least as early as 1848. See Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names, the Origins and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 116.

11. Born in 1813 in Savannah, Georgia, Fremont joined the Army as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838. He participated in or led exploration and mapping expeditions in the Mid- and Far West — along the Oregon Trail, the Oregon Country, and California. In 1841 he married Jessie Benton, the daughter of politically powerful U.S. Sen. Thomas Hart Benton. Historians debate his contributions to Western history, but he is generally regarded as an important explorer and mapmaker. Toward the end of the 1845–1846 California sojourn, Fremont received a court martial for disobedience and other charges and, although President James K. Polk suspended his sentence, he resigned from the Army. He lived in California acquiring large parcels of land and becoming rich during the gold rush. During this period he purchased a home at San Francisco's Black Point (later, Fort Mason) primarily for Jessie, who found ranch life lonesome. They lost this residence when the Army occupied Black Point during the Civil War.

In 1856 he ran for the presidency as the nominee of the new Republican party, losing to James Buchanan. At the beginning of the Civil War he returned to active duty with the rank of major general. His lack of success as a leader caused him to resign again, in 1862. He retired to California in 1864, eventually losing his wealth due to bankruptcies. He was restored to the rank of major general shortly before his death in 1890. Trevor N. Dupuy, Curt Johnson, and David L. Bongard, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 262–263.

12. Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846–1856, From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. xvii.

13. Grivas, *Military Governments*, pp. 50–55, 75, 78, and 100; Rogers, "Fort Point;" Malcolm Edwards, editor, *The California Diary of General E. D. Townsend* (n.p., Ward Ritchie Press, 1970), p. 76; Joseph T. Downey, *The Cruise of the Portsmouth, 1845–1847*, ed. Howard Lamar (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 134.

14. Oscar Lewis, compiler and editor, *This Was San Francisco* (New York: David McKay, 1962), p. 45; Henry G. Carlisle, *San Francisco Street Names, Sketches of the Lives of Pioneers for whom San Francisco Streets are named* ([San Francisco] 1954), "Battery Street;" Rand Richards, *Historic San Francisco, A Concise History and Guide* (San Francisco: Heritage House, 1991), p. 288. Other sources state that three guns were brought from the castillo and two others came from Sonoma. See Lawrence Kinnaird, "History of the Golden Gate and its Headlands" (MS, typescript, 1962 and 1967), p. 185.

15. Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California* (Microfilm, New Haven: Research Publications, 1975), p. 429; Brig. Gen. S. W. Kearny, March 15, 1847, to the adjutant general, U.S. Army, in U.S. Congress, House Executive Document 17, "California and New Mexico," 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1849, p. 285.
16. Grivas, *Military Governments*, p. 174, citing *The California Star*, January 13, 1847; Busch, *Fremont's Private Navy*, p. 43. These immigrants are not to be confused with the Mormon Battalion that arrived at San Diego in January 1847.
17. Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 183. Field officers: major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. Staff officers: quartermaster, commissary, surgeon, adjutant, etc. General officers: brigadier general, major general, lieutenant general, and general. Company officers: lieutenant and captain.
18. Jonathan D. Stevenson, Democratic politician, militia officer, and former member of the state legislature, was an energetic, strong-willed leader with a reputation for imposing discipline. In 1846 he was a widower with several children. He married again in California in 1851. Once in California he served as commandant for the southern California district with his headquarters at Los Angeles. After the war he lived in San Francisco dealing in real estate and, later, was a U.S. shipping commissioner. Bancroft, *California*, 5: 500 and 734. Although nominally an infantry regiment, the 7th Regiment, New York Volunteers was organized along legionary lines, as the entire U.S. Army had been in 1792. Inspired by the organization of the Roman legions of antiquity, this meant that the regiment included not only infantry but cavalry and artillery. In New York it was known variously as the New York Legion, Stevenson's New York Volunteers, the California Guard, and the California Regiment. Early in 1848 when the regiment was in California, the War Department redesignated the 7th as the 1st New York Volunteers. Another unique feature of Stevenson's regiment was that from its inception it was intended to be a colonization regiment, its soldiers to be mustered out and settled in California, and special emphasis was placed on recruiting skilled tradesmen. Brooke Nihart, "A New York Regiment in California, 1846-1848," *Military Collector & Historian*, 21 (Spring 1969): 1-11.
19. When he returned to the regulars in 1848, Hardie became a member of the 3d Artillery Regiment and remained at the Presidio for a time. During the Civil War he rose to the rank of brigadier general, again in the volunteers, and as an inspector general in the Regular Army. He died on active duty in 1876 with the rank of colonel. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1789-1903*, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1.
20. Francis D. Clark, *The First Regiment of New York Volunteers commanded by Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson in the Mexican War* (New York: Geo. S. Evans, 1882), pp. 11-23 and 49-52; James Lynch, *With Stevenson to California, 1846* (microfilm, New Haven: Research Publications, 1975), pp. 6-7 and 12-18.
21. Lynch, *With Stevenson*, pp. 20-21; Col. R. B. Mason, October 7, 1847, to the adjutant general, U.S. Army, in House Executive Document 17, p. 356. Mason commanded Military Department 10, that is, California and Territory of Oregon.
22. Post Returns, PSF, March 1847, Roll 967, Microcopy 617, NA.

Statistics concerning the regiment, 1846-1848:

mustered in at New York, August 1846	38 officers, 729 men
joined later	188 men
officers resigned	6
men discharged	136
died	33
killed in action (Indians)	2
killed in accident (at Los Angeles)	7
wounded in accident	2
deserted	323
mustered out at California	39 officers, 658 men

Bancroft, *California*, 5: 517.

23. Donald C. Biggs, *Conquer and Colonize, Stevenson's Regiment and California* (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1977), pp. 56-74; Bancroft, *California*, 5:504n and 513.

24. Heitman, *Historical Register*, Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Sherman, Soldier, Realist, American* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 24; "History of the San Francisco Depot," General Correspondence File, 1922-1935, Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG), RG 92, NA; Bancroft, *California*, 3:742; Biggs, *Conquer and Colonize*, p. 98, records that Lieutenant Gilbert and 27 men maintained a guard over the quartermaster and ordnance supplies. Folsom, June 6, 1847, in House Executive Document 17, p. 178. Folsom also had the important responsibility of being collector of customs at San Francisco.

25. The regiment brought 30 cannon to California, of which at least six ended up at the Presidio. Despite Dimmick's optimism, the volunteers did not succeed in mounting guns in the castillo. House Executive Document 17, pp. 338, 356, and 601.

26. Punishments before the Civil War included the lash, confinement to a black hole, branding with a hot iron, cropping an ear, marking with indelible pen, ducking in water, standing in or on a barrel for hours, marching with weights in a circle, wearing a ball and chain, and arms bound around knees with a stick in between (bucked and gagged). Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army, A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1986; pp. 24 and 197; Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue, The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 38-39.

27. In March 1848 Hardie journeyed to Oregon Territory in an attempt to enlist 800 volunteers for the occupation of Baja California and Mazatlan. He had absolutely no luck. On this trip, however, Hardie, who had been raised as an Episcopalian, converted to Catholicism. Mason, April 2, 1848, in House Executive Document 17, p. 464; Anon., *Memoir of James A. Hardie*, p. 15.

28. This should not have been a surprise. When organized in New York, the regiment learned there would be no allowances for travel after discharge. The Army regarded these volunteers as future California settlers as well as soldiers. Later, the Army relented and authorized travel costs. Only a few men accepted. House Executive Document 17.

29. Capt. Kimball Dimmick, Diary, MS, California Historical Society, San Francisco; Anon., *Memoir of James A. Hardie*, p. 15.

30. Grivas, *Military Governments*, pp. 126-129, quoting Mason, August 19, 1848. Even Mason's cook left for the mines and California's governor had to prepare his own meals.

31. George Stoneman also rose to fame in the Civil War. In the 1880s he served as governor of California. In World War II Camp Stoneman, east of San Francisco, served the Port of Embarkation as a personnel replacement center.

The 1st Regiment of Dragoons originated in 1833 as "an elite mounted unit composed of native-born Americans of special size and riding ability." In 1861 its designation changed to the 1st Cavalry Regiment.

32. Mason, December 27, 1848, in House Executive Document 17, p. 651.

33. The 3rd Regiment of Artillery was first organized in 1812. It consisted of two battalions each having 10 companies. In 1814 it consolidated with the 1st and 2nd Regiments to form the Corps of Artillery. Then, in 1821, it again reorganized as the 3rd Regiment. Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:51-57; Post Returns, 1848-1849.

CHAPTER 2. THE PRESIDIO, GROWING PAINS

The Presidio and the Army, 1849–1860

The sleepy village of San Francisco had a population of about 500 when gold was discovered in the Sierra foothills in 1848. Word flew swiftly and by the beginning of 1849, would-be gold miners and fortune hunters from the east coast, from Europe — from all over the world — flocked to California. A mixture of languages and cultures descended upon San Francisco, and by the end of that year the hastily built city had a population of 20,000. Gambling, drinking, and prostitution flourished as winter drove miners down from the hills. Inflation in real estate, food, and lodging made life difficult, even dangerous, as crime flourished. Major fires swept through the community from time to time. The Presidio's officers and men witnessed and became involved with the tumultuous times.

Neither the few dragoons nor the artillerymen stationed at the Presidio were able to curb the lawlessness that swept over San Francisco during the first six months of 1849. Discharged volunteers and others formed gangs, calling themselves the "Hounds" and the "Regulators," and preyed on businesses and newcomers alike. Despite military government, the Army in California remained too weak to impose order. Not until the more responsible citizens organized into committees to curb the violent instigators did a semblance of order return to the city.

At any rate, military government ended in December 1849 and California's new governor, Peter H. Barnett, assumed his office. The Presidio of San Francisco no longer concerned itself with civil matters and would not again until the Civil War.

By the end of 1849, three military installations had been established in northern California: the Presidio of Monterey, the Presidio of San Francisco, and the Benicia Barracks. Captain Keyes at the Presidio reported to the commanding officer of the Tenth Military Department (California) at Monterey. That officer in turn reported to the general commanding the Pacific Division (California and Oregon Territory), also headquartered at Monterey at that time. The Army, like most government agencies, underwent continual reorganization in succeeding years. Headquarters moved from Monterey to San Francisco (briefly), to Sonoma, to Benicia, to San Francisco (again, briefly), back to Benicia, and finally settled at San Francisco in 1857.¹

When its headquarters were in San Francisco, the Army rented office space, stables, and other structures as needed. The headquarters staff rented living arrangements in the city, as the Presidio did not have quarters for these personnel until the late 1870s. The records are incomplete as to the location of the headquarters in the early years. Gen. William T. Sherman wrote that the office in 1849 was in the custom house and a residence formerly owned by the Hudson's Bay Company served as quarters.²

When Bvt. Brig. Gen. Ethan Allen Hitchcock moved his headquarters from Benicia to San Francisco in 1852, he wrote, "In transferring head-quarters hither I have not consulted personal comfort or economy; but I have moved because it is the center of the country." The city directory for 1853 placed the "U.S. Army Office" in Folsom's iron building on the corner of California and Leidesdorf streets. A year later the Army's inspector general found the offices in a building on Montgomery Street. An 1856 San Francisco directory located the Quartermaster Department's office in a building on the southeast corner of California and Montgomery streets. In 1857, when the headquarters returned to San Francisco permanently, it first opened at 44 Bush Street. For most of the Civil War period, however, it rented offices at 742 Washington Street.³

Captain Keyes

Capt. Erasmus Darwin Keyes commanded the Presidio for almost 10 years, 1849–1858. During that period he was often absent from the post for a month on court martial duty, on extended leave, or absent for a year fighting Indians. Leaving his instructor position at the U.S. Military Academy, he sailed for California. "We entered the Golden Gate on the morning of April 1, 1849;" he continued, "The first persons I met were Lieutenant W. T. Sherman and Captain Joseph L. Folsom, who was quartermaster. Sherman saluted me as warmly as a brother, Folsom was less cordial, but he loaned me a wheelbarrow, by means of which I transported my trunks to the old Russian storehouse, where I slept the first two nights on the floor, with a bit of wood for a pillow."⁴

Early in his new assignment Keyes faced two difficult problems — desertion and squatters. When Company M arrived at the post in May it counted 57 men in the ranks. In June the post return recorded that five apprehended deserters had run off again. In July, 12 more men headed for the hills without leave. By the end of August the Presidio's enlisted strength had dwindled to 15. On one occasion Keyes sent an officer and a detail in pursuit of absentees. When

they reached the party, the detail took off with the deserters, leaving the officer empty-handed.⁵

Every private knew he could make more money in one day at the mines than he could make in months in the Army. Colonel Mason wrote in 1848, "A soldier of the artillery company returned here a few days ago from the mines, having been absent on furlough 20 days; he made by trading and working during that time \$1,500... a sum of money greater than he receives in pay, clothes, and rations during a whole enlistment of five years." Officers, too, felt the effects of the raging inflation in California. To ease the hardship somewhat, Congress authorized an increase in pay for military on the Pacific coast of \$2 a day for officers and double pay for enlisted men, the government retaining one half until honorable discharge. But desertion remained a headache long after the gold fields had lost their luster.⁶

Squatters (settlers without legal claim) on the military reservations in the Bay Area increased as the population expanded during the days of the land rush. Nowhere was the problem more serious than on the San Francisco peninsula. General Kearny in 1847 issued a proclamation that ceded to San Francisco "the whole of the Beach and water lots on the Eastern front of the Town, except such portions as might be selected by the senior officers of the Army and Navy, these for public purposes." Senior officers remained idle for the time being. Later that year Governor Mason directed Major Hardie at the Presidio to select such lands. Hardie, in conference with the Navy, reserved Rincon Point and certain lots within the town.

When Keyes took over in 1849 he learned that a number of persons had been allowed to occupy portions of the lots. The situation had become so messy that he recommended that the land be formally leased to responsible persons for a term of years. This was done, but eventually these town lots became part and parcel of San Francisco.

Not so Rincon Point; it was covered with squatters. Keyes decided on firm action. He donned his full-dress uniform and marched Company M to the reserve. There he ordered the illegal occupants to remove themselves and chattels immediately. All did so, except the "Sydney Duck," named for the Sydney Ducks, an infamous Australian criminal gang of the gold rush era.⁷ Keyes ordered his men to pick up the man's tents, which contained a hardware store, and take them outside the reserve. Later, the Duck sued the captain, but the case was thrown out of court.⁸

As for the Presidio, the first action concerning it occurred in 1848 when Mason ordered Quartermaster Folsom to set aside a reserve that would embrace the Presidio and Point San Jose. Folsom asked Lt. William H. Warner of the Topographical Engineers to carry out the survey. Folsom, not being a modest man, presented a sketch of a reserve containing 10,000 acres that included the northwest portion of the peninsula. The boundary line ran south from Point San Jose to about Twin Peaks, then southwest toward Lake Merced and the ocean.

The next year, a presidential commission composed of army and navy officers (the Joint Commission for Defense of Pacific Coast) arrived on the west coast for the purpose of establishing government reserves. Recommending fortifications on both sides of the Golden Gate and on Alcatraz Island, the commission concluded that San Francisco Bay was the most important naval and military position on the Pacific coast. As a result of its work, President Millard Fillmore signed an executive order on November 6, 1850, outlining the boundaries of the reserve:

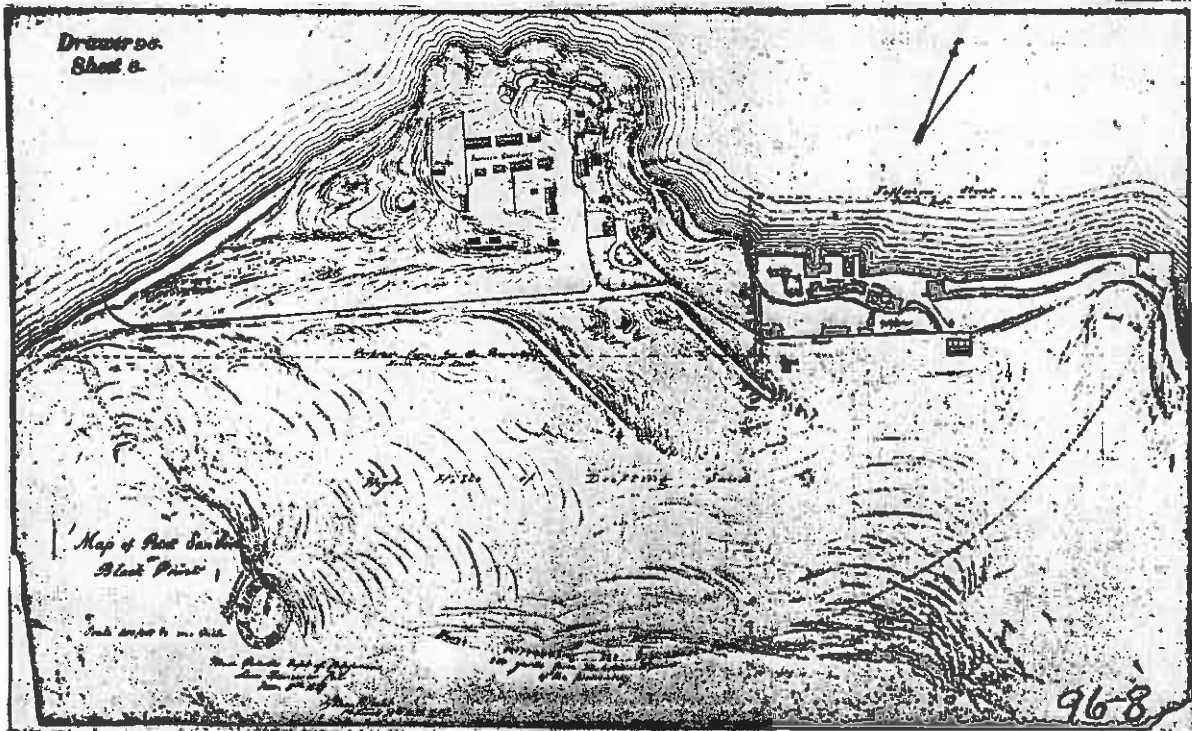
In the Bay of San Francisco, California: 1st From a point 800 yards south of Point San Jose to the southern boundary of the Presidio, along the southern boundary to its western extremity and thence in a straight line to the Pacific ocean, passing by the southern extremity of a pond [Mountain Lake] that has its outlet into the channel between Fort Point and Point Lobos.

A year later, on December 31, 1851, President Fillmore, to settle a land claim, signed a second executive order modifying the boundaries and having the effect of separating Point San Jose from the Presidio:

1st The promontory of Point [San] Jose within boundaries not less than eight hundred yards from its northern extremity [i.e., the boundary for Point San Jose was an arc with a radius of 800 yards from the northern extremity from shore to shore].

2d The Presidio tract and Fort Point embracing all land north of a line running in a westerly direction from the south eastern corner of the Presidio tract to the southern extremity of a pond lying between Fort Point and Point Lobos, and passing through the middle of said pond and its outlet to the channel of entrance from the ocean [Lobos Creek].⁹

To mark the southeastern corner of the reservation, Captain Keyes planted upright an old cannon at the spot, "at a point on the Hill, within a few feet of what is now [in 1871] the N.E. corner of the fence surrounding the Lone Mountain Cemetery." He also laid off two boundary



Point San Jose military reservation in 1867 (today Fort Mason). The dotted curved line marks the reservation boundary as set forth in President Millard Fillmore's executive order dated December 31, 1851. *National Archives.*

lines, to the ocean and to the bay. As he remembered, the line running northward from the cannon ran parallel to Larkin Street. Keyes constructed a wooden fence along that line.¹⁰

In January 1850 Keyes wrote headquarters that unless some decided steps were taken immediately, all the public reserves at San Francisco would be appropriated by citizens having claims. When Warner marked out the reservation, its dimensions were of no consequence as the country was not populated. Now, however, all was changed; citizens were everywhere. He discovered a survey party at work on Presidio land. He immediately pulled up the marking flags and ordered the surveyors to cease work. To back up his orders, he sent a soldier detail to obliterate all traces of the survey. He also reported removing 20 squatter tents from the reservation.

One of Keyes' officers, Lt. Horatio Gates Gibson, recalled those early years, "During that time no alteration of the boundaries of the Reserve...was made...Every effort was made by the military authorities to keep off trespassers, but they were persistent and numerous, and the efforts failed utterly so far as Point San Jose was concerned." Gibson returned to the Presidio in 1859 as post commander. Keyes' cannon was still in place. Gibson had a "crude" survey

made and he enclosed the reservation with substantial fences. The reservation boundaries would require adjustments in future years. Now, however, the Presidio had acquired its permanent size and shape.¹¹

One citizen received permission to build on the Presidio. Captain Keyes and his tiny command marched from the post in the spring of 1851 in response to miner-Indian conflicts. During his absence, Quartermaster Folsom gave permission to George F. Sweeney to erect a house on Redoubt (Rob) Hill for a telegraphic station to house a lookout reporting incoming ships. Some time in the 1850s, this lookout facility moved from the Presidio to Point Lobos, but the house remained. Capt. Jeremy F. Gilmer, Corps of Engineers, became supervisor of construction of a masonry fort at Fort Point in 1859. In a letter to the Chief of Engineers regarding a proposal for a tavern at Fort Point, he included a recommendation that the telegraphic station be removed, inasmuch as no one occupied it. Then, or sometime later, the house disappeared.¹²

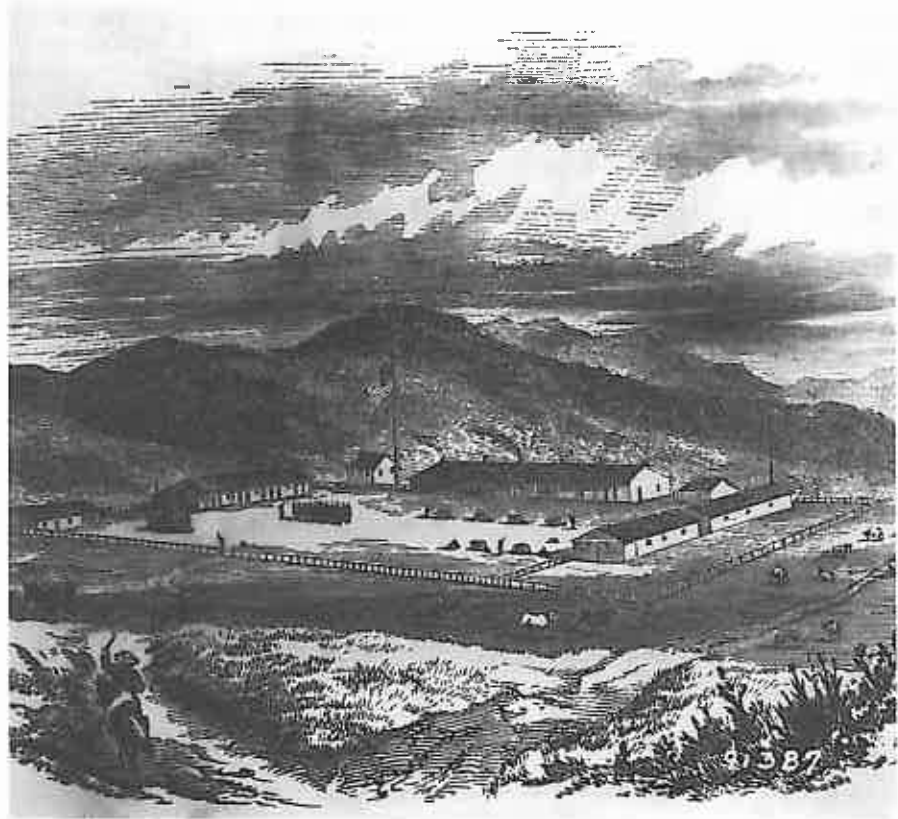
"Miserable Adoby Buildings"

When east coast Americans, especially those arriving by sea, first saw the Presidio's adobe buildings and the surrounding sandhills, their reaction was one of dislike for the dirty looking structures. A staff officer who visited the Presidio in 1852 described his ride out from San Francisco: "There are some small farms, or rather kitchen gardens, on the road to the Presidio, and the view of the Bay is fine from the high hills," but he was not impressed. "Everything looks dirty and sandy; you cannot [avoid] the impression that it is a mean country."¹³ A post quartermaster reported, "I consider all these buildings...of no value and the Post would be improved by their removal. They consist of old Adoba walls dilapidated and mouldering down from age with ponderous leaky roofs. In fact they are nothing now but unsightly mud enclosures."¹⁴

A pioneer California historian wrote an early description of the Presidio:

The old adobe buildings, and a portion of the walls, are there....The castle of the Mexican commandant and the fort are now occupied by American troops; and neat, whitewashed, picket fences supply the place of a large part of the old walls. The presidio is quadrangular, each side being in length about one hundred yards....The buildings within the enclosure are situated on three sides, extending the whole length of one side [west] and about half the length of the

The Presidio of San Francisco in 1852. The adobe building second from the left became the officers' club. Only remnants of the walls remained in 1994. National Archives, III-SC-91387.



other two [north and south], are of equal height with the walls, and are covered with earthen tile.¹⁵

The Army's first formal inspection of the Presidio occurred in May 1852 when Captain Keyes was on leave. Capt. Charles S. Merchant, 3d Artillery, the acting post commander, accompanied the inspector general on his rounds. At that time an adobe building, number 4 (no longer extant), on the north side of the compound, served as a magazine for gun powder. The inspector thought that at a small expense it could be fitted up as a much-needed hospital. And so it became. Concerning the buildings in general, the inspector said they had been:

erected by the Mexican government...of *adobe* or sun dried brick. They afford three Barrack-rooms, together with a mess-room & kitchen sufficiently commodious for one Company of Artillery — not more.

Of these old buildings there is one now that was designed for officers' quarters — these rooms are on the ground floor; & with some repairs that have been made by the troops have been rendered tolerably comfortable — that is to say habitable; but they do not afford the complements of quarters, offices, etc. for the number of officers belonging to the Garrison.

The inspector estimated that the quartermaster had spent \$6,000 in making the adobe quarters, barracks, guardroom, and prison habitable.¹⁶

A sketch of the Presidio, prepared in 1852, confirmed the inspector's findings. A flagstaff flying the Stars and Stripes overlooked the whitewashed buildings and drilling troops. While the inspector recorded the artillery as consisting of two 6-pounder field guns and two 12-pounder howitzers, the sketch showed six cannon. Cattle roamed the land outside the fence — a familiar scene at the Presidio for many years to come.¹⁷

According to Captain Keyes, in January 1854 a windstorm blew the "zinc" roof off the enlisted barracks and broke some window glass. Captain Keyes surveyed the damage and concluded that shingles would make a better roof.¹⁸ But the new Department of the Pacific commander, Brig. Gen. John E. Wool, had a better idea. He ordered the immediate construction of a wood-frame barracks of two stories, 116 feet in length, large enough to hold two companies of 80 men each.¹⁹

The barracks was completed when Inspector General Joseph F. K. Mansfield visited the post in 1854:

The quarters for the soldiers were miserable adoby buildings, the leavings of the Mexican Government, but were kept in good police and order. And the quarters for the officers, not much better. A temporary barrack for the soldiers has been subsequently erected by order of General Wool.

The store house for arms and clothing badly ventilated and not suitable.

The hospital building a poor structure, and it should be levelled as it occupies the ground suitable for drills, parades, etc.

All the buildings for stores etc etc worthless.

A garden existed here, but it was in very bad order and not, in my opinion, sufficiently large, yet there is land enough.²⁰

The post quartermaster, Capt. Robert Allen, compiled a building report for the Presidio in March 1855. He provided numbers for the five principal structures, the first of several numbering systems at the Presidio:



"SOUTH ADOBE" QUARTERS.



"ADOBE" IN REAR OF ADJUTANT'S OFFICE.
Blacksmith and Carpenter's Shop



"ADOBE" NEXT HOSPITAL

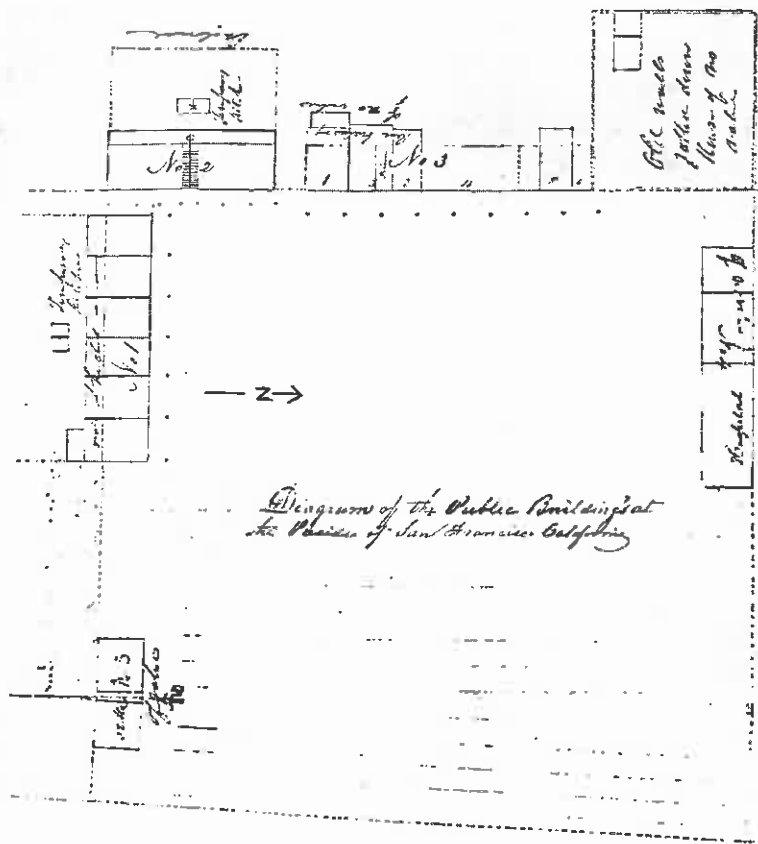
**CALIFORNIA
PRESIDIO.**
Latitude 32° 55' N., Longitude 122° 25' W.
PUBLIC BUILDINGS.
Approved by the Sec'y of War.

The "South Adobe" eventually became the Presidio officers' club. The other two adobes were pressed into use in the early years, eventually disappearing. U.S. Army Military History Institute.

No. 1., he said, served as officers' quarters. It was an adobe building, one-story high, having a porch in front. It contained six rooms, each measuring 18 feet by 22 feet. At that time one room served as a kitchen, one as a mess room, and two two-room sets were quarters for Captain Keyes and Lt. Michael R. Morgan, a Canadian-born graduate of West Point.²¹

No. 2. Barracks for soldiers. This was a new, wood-frame two-story building; the lower rooms measured 25 feet by 35 feet, the upper rooms 25 feet by 40 feet. Two one-story rooms to the rear were used as mess rooms; each was 12 feet by 40 feet.

No. 3. Old adobe barracks, dimensions 20 feet by 105 feet. This building was divided into six rooms, the first 20 feet by 20 feet used as a guardroom; the second room, of the same size, was partitioned and used as a prison and clothing room; the third room, of the same size, was occupied by laundresses†; the fourth room was 20 feet by 30 feet and was used as a quartermaster storeroom; the fifth also housed laundresses and measured 15 feet by 20 feet; and the sixth room was uninhabitable.²²

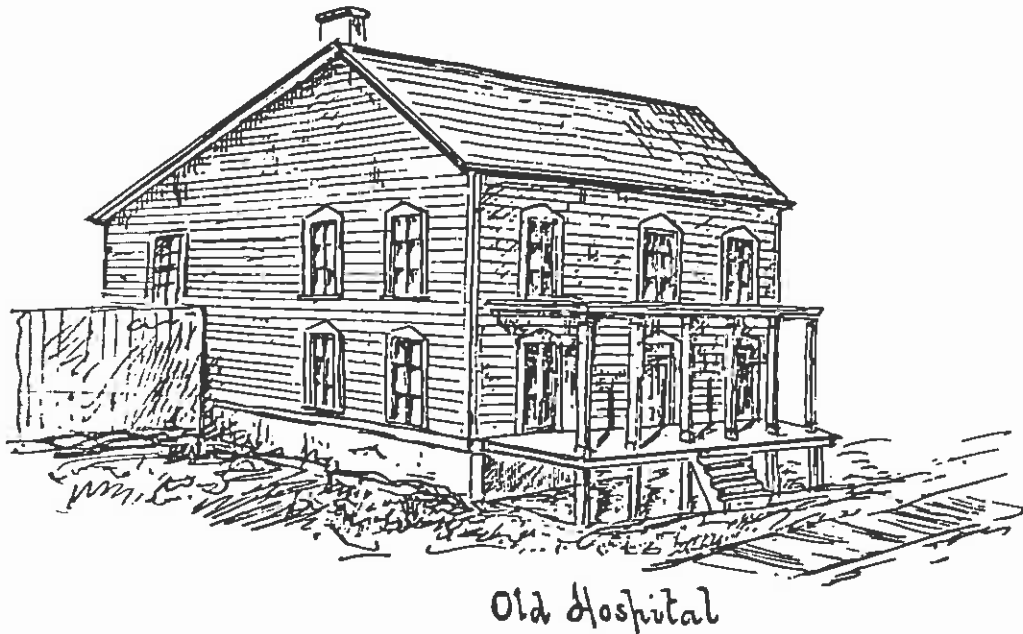


Plan of the Presidio of San Francisco, 1855, by Capt. Robert Allen, U.S. Army. National Archives, OQMG, RG 92.

No. 4. An old adobe, 20 feet by 60 feet, used as a hospital. Two adjoining rooms were uninhabitable.

No. 5. An old dilapidated adobe unfit for occupation. A stable occupied a corner room, 20 feet by 20 feet.²³

Allen prepared a plan of the post that contributed additional features. Adobes 1 and 3 and the new frame barracks had porches along their fronts. Small rooms had been added to the rear of the officers' quarters by enclosing a rear porch. Also, a temporary kitchen for the officers' mess had been erected to the rear. The northwest corner of the compound contained a rectangle of "fallen down" adobe walls that possibly served as a corral. A picket fence surrounded the rest of the post.



First American post hospital, 1857-1864. A bronze plaque on building 2, erected as a general hospital in 1864, proclaims this building to be the wood frame construction post hospital built in 1857. After 1864, this 1857 building served other functions before being demolished in the 1870s or 1880s. The 1864 general hospital, 2, downgraded to a post hospital in 1865, superseded in function this first hospital, which stood in the vicinity of Pershing Square. *National Archives.*

In 1857 the Army constructed a frame, two-story post hospital to replace the unsatisfactory one that had been established in an adobe. Time would show, however, that this new building was constructed in a flimsy manner.²⁴

The old Spanish Castillo de San Joaquin at Fort Point was not entirely neglected in this early period. Capt. Kimball Dimmick, New York Volunteers, recorded in his diary in May 1848 that he was "Detailed to take charge of the working party to repair the old Fort and mount the Guns in Battery." When engineers began their blasting operations at Fort Point in 1853, they first removed the American armament that had been mounted at the old castillo — four 32-pounder guns and two 8-inch howitzers. The assumption has been that the volunteers emplaced these weapons in 1848 about the time Captain Dimmick made his diary entry, but that was not the case. In September 1847, Colonel Mason wrote that the volunteers "have been engaged principally...in repairing the old presidio...Little or nothing has been done to the fort there, and as yet not one of the guns has been placed in the battery there." A few days

later, he said, "the guns, mortars, carriages, shot and shells are in the town in the open air, protected by paint alone. The great difficulty of hauling such articles over the rugged hills...will prevent their being hauled this season."

A year later the exasperated colonel wrote, "It was impossible to repair the old fort or to construct any new works with the volunteer garrison; and at this moment the guns, mortars, shot, and shells are lying in the town of San Francisco, not 20 yards from the place where they were first disembarked."

Not until the spring of 1849, after the volunteers had left the army, did the castillo receive armament. Brig. Gen. Persifor Smith, then temporarily headquartered in San Francisco, took action. "I propose to mount six pieces at the point, viz: four 32-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers," he wrote, adding, "No work will be done except laying the platforms as the site of this fortification will most probably have to be cut down in regularly fortifying the harbor."²⁵

The division's staff engineer, Lt. Henry Halleck, wrote in 1853, "In my opinion it would be useless to mount any guns in that battery in its present state." To be of any use at all, the work would have to be rebuilt. On reading Halleck's report, the Board of Engineers for the Pacific coast concluded that "the repairing and arming of the old battery at the entrance of San Francisco bay will not be included in any plan of defense for that locality." A year later, the officer in charge of the works reported, "An old Spanish redan of brick which crowned the promontory has been removed and its material secured. The guns formerly mounted in the work have also been removed." In addition, a lighthouse that had recently been erected in the center of the battery was demolished.²⁶

In 1853-1854 the engineers blasted and excavated the promontory. They reduced the elevation of the headland from 97 feet to 16 feet, and commenced construction of a new masonry fort. George Tays, describing this event in his landmark study of the castillo, added an intriguing note. "The only vestige of the old works that was left was the rear wall of the guard house at the south west end of the fort. The edge of the cut came to the inner face of the wall." People continue to search for this fragment of history. The wall was uncovered, and probably destroyed, by construction of the Golden Gate Bridge.²⁷

A Supply of Water

San Francisco's rapid growth during the gold rush resulted in a demand for a potable water supply. Water-carriers, who peddled water on mules or carts, drew water from wells or springs on the peninsula or from Mountain Lake, which lay southwest of the Presidio. Competition arose about 1850 when the Sausalito Water Company in Marin began shipping water by barge to San Francisco. The U.S. government officially established the boundaries of the Presidio that same year, placing Mountain Lake within the reserve. The city continued to grow, and it soon became apparent that its water needs demanded a greater increase in capital investment.

Mountain Lake as a source of potable water for the citizens of San Francisco appeared to be a promising venture in 1851 when Azro D. Merrifield organized the Mountain Lake Water Company under a special act of the California legislature. He obtained a contract from the City of San Francisco that gave him a 24-year grant to provide water to public and private interests. Merrifield changed his plans and left San Francisco that same year, but not before he sold his franchise to a local group. This new Mountain Lake Water Company did not begin work until the city granted it a monopoly in 1852. Even then the going was tough—labor disputes, economic depression, and the like. Groundbreaking finally took place on May 14, 1853.

For a few months in 1853 the newspaper *Alta California* carried glowing accounts of progress in constructing the 3,500-foot "Mountain Lake Tunnel" through a hill about one-half mile south of the Presidio. The aqueduct when finished would be 3 miles in length and end at Larkin Street. Within six months, however, the company failed. No further effort to tap the resources of Mountain Lake or Lobos Creek occurred until 1857.²⁸

These events took place even though Mountain Lake lay within the boundaries of the Presidio of San Francisco military reservation. The Presidio itself in those early years depended on springs on the reserve for a supply of water. An army map prepared in 1870 showed "Queen Springs," probably today's El Polin Spring, south of the main post, and a pipeline running from it to the south end of the post in the vicinity of the bachelor officers' quarters. When construction began at Fort Point, the Army laid a 2-inch redwood pipeline from a spring about 3,200 feet south of the engineers' wharf (possibly in the vicinity of Fort Winfield Scott's officers' club [1331], to a reservoir on the bluff above the wharf.²⁹



The water flume, covered with planks, provided a novel walkway along the Presidio's cliffs. *Society of California Pioneers.*

While the Mountain Lake Water Company slumbered, John Bensley and others formed the San Francisco Water Works Company, popularly called the Bensley Water Company, and after a difficult struggle they acquired permission from the City and County Board of Supervisors in August 1857 to provide the city with water.³⁰ The new company purchased part of the Lobos Creek Ranch south of the Presidio, thus acquiring rights to one-half of Lobos Creek's water; the U.S. Army claimed the other half. Earlier the company had forwarded a request to Col. René DeRussy of the Corps of Engineers, seeking permission to construct a flume from the creek north on the Presidio's ocean side, across Fort Point, then eastward to a point beyond Point San Jose (Black Point, Fort Mason). The company said that if the request was approved, water could be supplied to Fort Point and the main post free of cost. The War Department approved the request in February 1857 and issued a special use permit having three conditions:

1. The government could cancel the permit at any time.
2. The aqueduct would be completed in a timely manner.
3. Sections of the aqueduct not commanded by the guns of Fort Point would be buried (i.e., a tunnel carried the aqueduct through the escarpment south of the fort).³¹

When the Mountain Lake Water Company learned of this agreement, it wrote the secretary of war requesting an annulment, inasmuch as similar permission had already been granted to



Another view of the Spring Valley water flume along the Pacific side of the Presidio. The fort at Fort Point is in the distance. View toward the north. *Society of California Pioneers.*

Mountain Lake. The Engineer Department searched its files but could find no documentation giving that company permission to lay pipe through government grounds.³²

The date of completion of the Bensley aqueduct has not been firmly established. The *Alta California* reported on February 15, 1860, that "water is now conducted by iron pipes to 644 consumers." A year later President Bensley reported to the Board of Supervisors that 22.5 miles of pipe and three reservoirs had been constructed. Consumption in 1860 had been 500,000 gallons per day; this had increased to 700,000 gallons per day by July 1861. There now were 1,600 consumers and 193 hydrants.³³

The most complete description of the aqueduct that has been found was a circa 1930 newspaper article by Otto W. Degen, an employee in the Quartermaster Department at Fort Mason. He wrote that a wooden sheet pile dam had been constructed across Lobos Creek about 500 feet north of the 25th Avenue bridge. This raised the water to the needed height. A 2- by 2-foot wooden plank flume followed along the cliffs on the ocean shore to Fort Point. At Fort Point a 2,812-foot tunnel led across the promontory behind the brick shot forges. From there the flume continued hanging along the bluff to a point to the rear of Crissy Field's headquarters building [651]. There the flume changed to a 26-inch cement pipe following the slight

grade along the side of the higher ground on the south side of Crissy Field to near the 1930s post exchange where the War Department erected a small pumping plant, probably by 1862. The water was pumped to the two Holabird reservoirs, with capacities of 438,000 gallons and 70,000 gallons, at the south end of the post.

The 26-inch cement pipe led from the pump house along the rear of the buildings that later became Letterman General Hospital, then south of Bay Street to near Laguna and Bay where it changed to a wooden flume again, going around Fort Mason. It ended at the company's pump house at the foot of Van Ness Avenue. This flume supplied about 1.5 million gallons per day. The flume around Fort Mason was later changed to a 4- by 4-foot brick tunnel about 2,800 feet in length that passed under the fort from about Laguna and Bay streets to west of the brick chimney of the company's pumping plant.³⁴

Boards covered the flume to provide a walkway for maintenance purposes and to keep debris from falling into it. People soon discovered this to be a novel hike:

Beyond Black Point we climbed a trestle and mounted a flume that was our highway to the sea. Through this flume the city was supplied with water. The flume was a square trough, open at the top and several miles in length. It was cased in a heavy frame; and along the timbers that crossed over it lay planks, one after another, wherever the flume was uncovered. This narrow path, intended for the convenience of the workmen who kept the flume in repair, was our delight....Sometimes we were many feet in the air, crossing a cove where the sea broke at high tide; sometimes we were in cut among the rocks on a jutting point; and sometimes the sand from the desert above us drifted down and buried the flume, now roofed over, quite out of sight.³⁵

An archeological report in 1975 stated that traces of the ancient flume could still be found along the Presidio's ocean headlands, "fragments of wooden planks, possibly the bottom of the flume...portions of concrete supports for the flume...[and] a short section of flume sides and bottom are still visible as imbedded in the earthen material of the seaciff."³⁶

The water company also constructed a well or shaft near the Arguello Boulevard (1st Avenue) gate in 1858. It measured several feet in diameter, uncased, and of an unknown depth (some said 180 feet). The company abandoned the well sometime during the Civil War. About 1880 the Army erected a windmill and a pump there along with an 800-gallon tank. The post quartermaster used this water source for road sprinkling and irrigation. By 1896 all the equipment was in bad shape and the supply of water was scarcely sufficient for the gatekeeper.³⁷

In 1862 the Bensley Water Company asked to use water from Mountain Lake. The War Department readily agreed but was surprised that the company did not already have permission. The only restriction that Washington imposed was that the company not tunnel northward through Presidio Hill but employ a route from the pond to the head of Lobos Creek. It warned that the company should not expect to have a monopoly on lake water. The company promptly objected to this restriction.³⁸

Shortly after Bensley had formed his water company, George H. Ensign established the Spring Valley Water Company, which quickly became a major competitor in supplying water to San Francisco. In 1864 local newspapers reported a "gigantic swindle" involving the water companies. The authorities arrested three Bensley Company employees for grand larceny in the theft of \$80,000 worth of water from the Spring Valley Company by tapping into its main pipeline and "receiving nearly 1,000,000 gallons of water every 24 hours, for several months." In the settlement the Bensley firm agreed to pay the costs of the damage and later that year the two companies consolidated under the Spring Valley name. The new organization took over the management of the Presidio flume and the pumping station at Black Point.³⁹

Advances in artillery during the Civil War made masonry forts such as Fort Point obsolete. Army engineers at San Francisco began planning for new batteries on the headlands at Fort Point (East and West Batteries). They soon discovered that the water flume occupied precisely the positions selected for gun emplacements. The flume could not be closed — the water supply of about 3,000,000 gallons per day was too valuable. Moreover, the company had fulfilled its agreement to supply water without cost to Fort Point, the Presidio, and Point San Jose. Seeking a solution, the company made surveys to determine if a tunnel could be dug to avoid the batteries. Such a tunnel, however, would be a mile in length and would take two or three years to construct. The only other solution would be for the company to move its pumping engines from Point San Jose to Lobos Creek, pump the water up a hill overlooking the creek (the current Rob Hill), and allow the water to flow by gravitation to the city.⁴⁰

Whatever compromises were reached, the flume remained and continued to deliver water to the city. In 1879 when the West Battery was completed and work had ceased on East Battery, a report concerning the water supply stated that the flume still carried abundant and excellent water to the main post. A steam engine forced the water to a reservoir at the southern, higher end of the post from where it was piped to the different buildings. Pipes emptied

waste water into large covered sewers on both sides of the post and discharged it into tide water.⁴¹

Col. William H. French, the Presidio's commander, visited the Lobos Creek area in January 1878. He examined the three springs at the head of the creek, and noted that the water welled up through the sand and flowed into a small protected reservoir. He commented on the clarity of the water at the source, noting that there was no connection with the water in Mountain Lake. The water company had laid a pipe between the two in the 1860s but had never had cause to use it.⁴²

Fort Point's water supply came under discussion in 1887. At that time its water supply came from both the old spring southeast of the point and the Spring Valley flume. A windmill drew water from the flume to a tank and another windmill raised the water from the tank to a reservoir on Telegraph Hill (now Rob Hill). This reservoir also supplied water to the national cemetery. The system did not work well because from time to time, strong winds wrecked the windmills or equally as bad, proved too gentle to operate the windmills. In any case there was not enough pressure to fight building fires. The post quartermaster recommended abandoning the flume and either placing pumping machinery at Lobos Creek and a reservoir on Telegraph Hill large enough to supply water to the entire reservation, or preferably, placing a large reservoir on Presidio Hill if a good well could be developed. In March 1888 the War Department approved \$1,200 for test borings for wells.⁴³

In September the quartermaster reported on the experimental boring of test holes, saying that three had been dug. All produced clear water, one of which gave 8 gallons per minute. Apparently the results proved unsatisfactory, for three years later another artesian well was opened and a sample of the water sent to the post surgeon for analysis.

From time to time friction developed between the Presidio and the adjacent U.S. Marine Hospital. Such was the case in 1892 when Colonel Graham wrote to the "Officer in Charge" of the hospital pointing out that several acres of the hospital's large garden adjoined Mountain Lake and that the hospital put large amounts of manure on those acres. The War Department, said the colonel, had full responsibility for ensuring a pure water supply in Mountain Lake and Lobos Creek and he desired that gardening in that area cease.⁴⁴

The Presidio's water supply faced a major crisis in 1893 when a large landslide on the ocean side took out a portion of the Spring Valley flume. The company immediately installed a 6-inch iron pipe around the slide in order to maintain the flow of water to the post. This solution was soon plagued with frequent breakdowns. Furthermore, only 10,000 gallons per hour reached the post, an insufficient amount. If that were not enough, a report in November stated that a sewer at 21st Avenue threatened to contaminate Lobos Creek. About this time the Spring Valley Water Company ceased using Lobos Creek water for the city, and the Presidio assumed responsibility for repairing the flume.⁴⁵

Through 1894 the Presidio experienced a series of problems with the delivery of water. At one point, a hose used at the slide gave out, leaving the Presidio with only a two-day supply of water. When ocean storms arrived in the fall the waves at high tide washed out the bench on which a temporary flume stood. Finally, the Spring Valley Water Company announced that it would abandon the flumes and aqueducts that it had maintained on federal property by license.⁴⁶

While struggling with the flume situation the Army also began constructing a new water system for the Presidio. In 1894 a pumping plant and a system of driven and open wells were installed in the southwest portion of the reservation. Some of the wells reached depths of 110 feet. By midsummer the flume had been reconstructed and its use resumed. In 1896 the Quartermaster Department began the excavation of a tunnel starting at the small ravine southwest of the new brick barracks (the bowl below Infantry Terrace). The tunnel extended under Presidio Hill for about 2,000 feet and cost \$10,000 before it was abandoned. Not enough water was found and the project was considered a failure. In 1897 the post quartermaster constructed a large concrete reservoir [1469] near the mortar battery McKinnon-Stotsenberg then under construction.⁴⁷

The arrival of Spanish-American War volunteers at San Francisco in 1898 placed a further strain on the Army's water supply. At first the Quartermaster Department considered connecting the Presidio's pumping plant with Mountain Lake to supply water to the volunteers' Camp Merritt south of the Presidio. Army doctors, however, considered the scheme to be inadvisable. Mountain Lake water had become polluted from both the Marine Hospital and from citizens' homes along Lake Street. The Army then arranged to have city water supplied to the volunteers.⁴⁸

A visit from an inspector general in 1900 shed further light on the Presidio's water supply. Mountain Lake no longer supplied any water. The Presidio's wells could supply only a third of the reservation's requirements. The Army purchased the other two-thirds from Spring Valley. In 1901 the company placed a pumping plant on the south bank of Lobos Creek near its mouth and directed the entire flow of the stream to the pipe system of the Richmond District to the south. The Board of Supervisors, however, condemned the water as unfit for drinking. Lobos Creek then poured 2,000,000 gallons per day directly into the ocean. "An utter loss," said Major Harts in 1907.⁴⁹

A comprehensive account of the Presidio's water system appeared three years later, in 1904. Water for the post came from wells near Mountain Lake and from the Spring Valley Water Company mains. Ten wells — one 16-inch, eight 20-inch, and one 45-inch — had a capacity of 13,100 gallons per hour. Water from Mountain Lake was pumped into a small reservoir and used for fire and sprinkler purposes. Water for the quartermaster mule stable on the bay shore came from an artesian well in the Lower Presidio having a capacity of 100 gallons per hour. Presidio water was also delivered to Fort Baker, to the discharge camp on Angel Island, and to the transport tug *Slocum* for her own use.

The average capacity of the 1901 plant was 156,116 gallons for domestic use and 74,139 gallons for fire and sprinkling purposes per day, thus the permanent connection to the city main. Machinery at the pumping works included:

Pumps

1 duplex Dow
2 dry-air duplex Dow
1 Smith-Vaile vacuum
1 Hooker deep well
3 Thompson & Evans
 deep well
2 Snow fuel oil

Tanks

2 wooden storage,
 20,000 gallons each
1 wooden storage,
 5,000 gallons
2 wooden settling,
 5,000 gallons each
2 wooden settling,
 3,000 gallons each

Boilers

1 Risdom Iron Works
 80-horsepower tubular
1 Union Iron Works
 80-horsepower tubular

Reservoirs

1 cement and brick,
 488,000 gallons
1 cement, 112,000 gallons
1 cement, 140,000 gallons at
 Fort Point
1 cement, 80,000 at Fort Point

This system, when fully installed, together with improvements and extensions, cost the Army \$51,137. The water shortage continued, however. A company commander complained in December 1904 that the water for his outfit was cut off every few days from 1 to 4 hours.⁵⁰

In his annual report to Washington in 1907, the Pacific Division commander, Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston, bluntly stated that the question of an adequate water supply for the Presidio of San Francisco continued to be a most serious one, writing that, "for years this matter has dragged along," and adding that the Lobos Creek project had been written about until it was threadbare. Apparently it was not quite threadbare, for that same year Maj. William Harts wrote his comprehensive plan for the future of the Presidio. Concerning the water supply, the major developed a host of recommendations:

- Purchase the south bank of Lobos Creek.
- Construct a stone boundary wall with an iron fence on top.
- Divert all storm water and surface drainage away from the creek.
- Construct a permanent dam on the creek.
- Set up filters.
- Construct a wet well.
- Construct a pumping station having a capacity of 2,000,000 gallons per day.
- Provide 14-inch cast iron pipe and lay from pumps to a reservoir near Battery Stotsenberg.
- Construct a distribution system.⁵¹

The Presidio published a circular in 1909 that highlighted the continuing shortage of water and urging the garrison to economize. Finally, the War Department authorized the construction of a new pumping plant near the mouth of Lobos Creek. Construction took place 1910–1912. The principal structures were:

- Water reservoir [1770], built in 1910
- Water valve house [1771], built in 1910
- Water filtration plant [1773], built in 1910
- Water treatment plant [1776], built in 1912
- Water settling plant [1778], built in 1911
- Water treatment plant [1779], built in 1912
- Civilian housing [1781], built in 1911

Harts' recommendation for a reservoir on Presidio Hill was realized in 1912 when the huge reservoir [313] with a capacity of 6,000,000 gallons, and the nearby valve house [310] were completed.⁵²



Above: Water reservoir, 313, on Presidio Hill, above Infantry Terrace, circa 1939. Soldiers are hosing and cleaning the structure. *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*

Below: Water reservoir, possibly today's 1770, constructed in 1910 at the Presidio water plant near Lobos Creek. Note the peculiar log fence near the beach. *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*



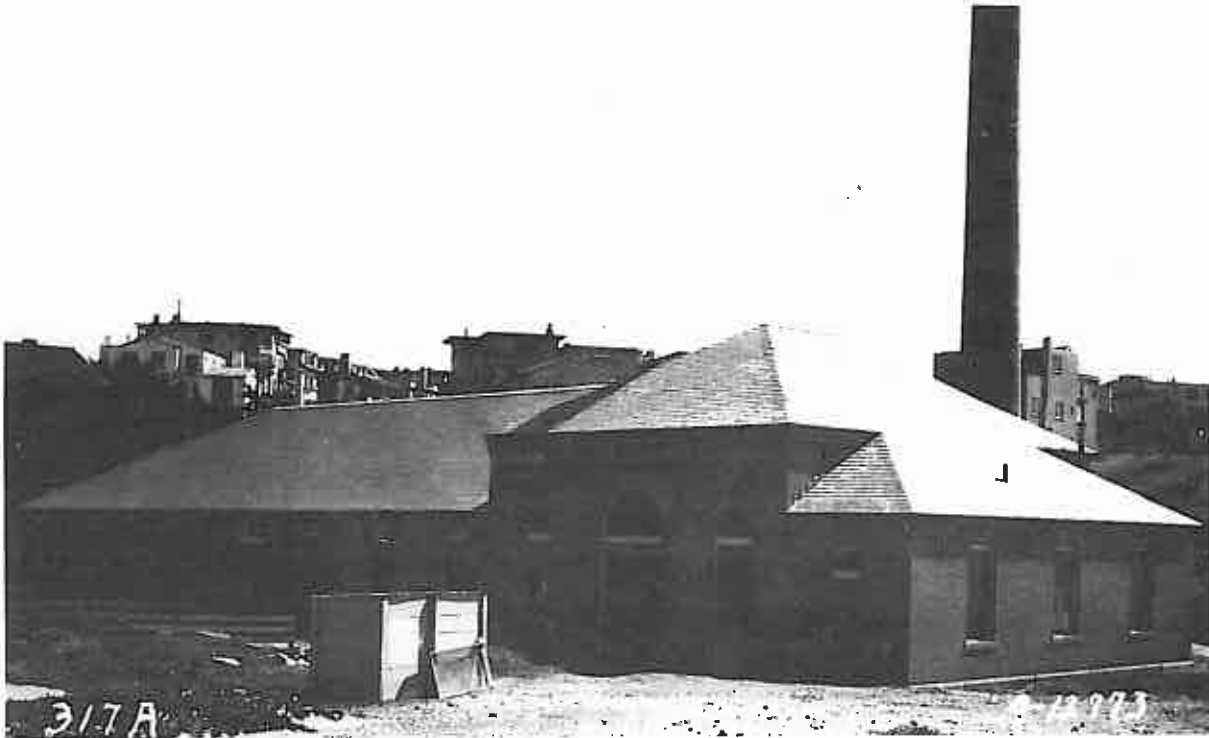
For the first time in many years the Army was satisfied with the Presidio's water system. A 1912 report stated that the new plant supplied the entire post except the East Cantonment†, which acquired its water from Spring Valley. The Presidio system now supplied the U.S. Army General Hospital, new Fort Winfield Scott, Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, Fort Baker, the harbor boats, Fort Mason, and the army transports and docks. An 8-inch pipe laid along the city streets supplied water to Fort Mason.⁵³

Another of Major Harts' recommendations became reality in 1915 when the U.S. Army acquired 3.58 acres of land along the south bank of Lobos Creek as well as all rights of the Spring Valley Water Company and its successors. In 1924 three wells and the water in Lobos Creek were connected to the pumping plant and six additional wells were under construction. But by 1931 another water shortage had developed and rationing was again the order of the day. The problem was due to the declining flow in the creek. While Ninth Corps Area wished to connect the Presidio to the city water mains, the quartermaster general believed that an additional shaft at the creek was the better answer. Apparently, this crisis passed without significant changes.⁵⁴

In its *Base Closure Final Environmental Impact Statement* for the Presidio in 1991, the U.S. Army described Lobos Creek as the primary source of potable water located on the reservation. It provided 60 percent of the annual requirements, or 495 million gallons per year. In addition, wells 6 and 13 in the Lobos Creek basin provided another 10 percent. City water supplied the remainder. The Baker Beach plant treated 2.4 million gallons per day. Treatment included settling, chlorination, fluoridation, and filtering. Three wells and their pump houses supplied nonpotable water to the Presidio golf course. Mountain Lake had a surface area of 4 acres and a maximum depth of 15 feet. Lobos Creek, a separate water course, was supplied entirely by groundwater and flowed perennially.⁵⁵

Ansel Adams, the late famed California photographer, grew up near Lobos Creek:

With a resolute whisper, Lobos Creek flowed past our home on its mile-long journey to the ocean. It was bordered, at times covered, with watercress and alive with minnows, tadpoles, and a variety of larvae. Water bugs skimmed the open surfaces and dragonflies darted above the streambed. In spring flowers were rampant and fragrant. In heavy fog the creek was eerie, rippling out of nowhere and vanishing into nothingness.⁵⁶



Water filtration plant, 1773, at Lobos Creek, circa 1939. Note the smokestack, now gone. *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS*

A beachcomber today at Baker Beach may still wade across Lobos Creek's outlet as it vanishes into the ocean.

The Regulars

Following the departure of the volunteers, a detachment of the 1st U.S. Dragoons occupied the humble post until Company M, 3d Artillery, arrived in the spring of 1849. Plagued with desertions throughout the early 1850s, these few soldiers could hardly form a platoon†, let alone a company. As 1853 ended the promise of reinforcements became a reality when the headquarters, band, and six companies of the 3d Artillery, 600 people, departed New York Harbor bound for California aboard *San Francisco*. A great storm off Cape Hatteras smashed into the vessel, disabling her. Then a gigantic wave followed and swept 160 passengers overboard. Finally a small vessel came upon the distressed ship and managed to take off more than 100 of the survivors before the seas forced it away. Five days passed before a second ship succeeded in rescuing the remainder. *San Francisco* was never seen again.⁵⁷

Elements of the 3d Artillery did reach California in 1854, by land and by sea. At the Presidio, Company L joined the command in May 1854, temporarily bringing the strength to 137 enlisted men. About the time of Company L's departure for Fort Vancouver in June, the division commander, Brig. Gen. John E. Wool, contemplated removing the Presidio's garrison completely. Capt. John G. Barnard, Corps of Engineers and the senior engineer overseeing the construction of coastal defenses on the west coast, alarmed about this possibility, wrote General Wool on the subject: "I feel it my duty to call your attention to the probable consequences of an entire removal of the garrison from the Presidio." He continued, "This reservation was made for the purpose of securing the site of the fortifications at Fort Point and their auxiliary out works and the fine location for barracks for troops at the Presidio...no part of it can be relinquished without serious detriment to the military service." He said that the two hills, Presidio and Redoubt (now Rob Hill) had been selected as the sites of redoubts to defend the coastal batteries against an attack on the land side. He also wrote, "the Presidio is unquestionably the best site for barracks for troops on the Bay of San Francisco.... nothing but the actual presence of a military force strong enough to repel intruders, prevents...the whole reserve from being occupied by squatters." Barnard's fears subsided; Company M remained and the Presidio's strength gradually increased.⁵⁸

During this period men desiring to join the Army had to meet a few requirements. They could range in age from 21 to 35. Minimum height was set at 5 feet, 3 inches. Only whites served in the Army at that time and supposedly they knew the English language. In addition to the pay increases allowed on the west coast, the enlisted pay scale army-wide was increased in 1854:

	Private	Corporal	Sergeant	Sergeant Major
Before 1854	\$7	9	13	17
1854	\$11	13	17	21

In addition each soldier received food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and transportation. In addition to their artillery duties, the Presidio's soldiers trained in all things infantry, and, it will be noted, they fought as infantrymen and sometimes as cavalry in the Indian campaigns on the Pacific Slope. An inspector in 1852 noted that new recruits† at the Presidio drilled twice a day, once as artillery and once as infantry.⁵⁹

The post returns for this decade shed only small insights to garrison life. In July 1849 an enlisted man died, apparently of natural causes. An accidental death, details not given, occurred in October. A civilian, J. H. Van Mehr, became the Protestant chaplain in February 1850. He lost the position a year later when the Army struck the Presidio from the list of posts authorized to have chaplains.

The 1852 inspection disclosed that the Presidio had a stable of 12 horses and 16 mules. Three of the horses were kept in the stable (building 5—no longer extant) and received a ration of grain. They were used for express service and pursuit of deserters. The other nine horses survived on the Presidio's pastures. The post had two wagons, each hauled by a six-mule team. They hauled lumber for construction and wood for fuel. The soldiers had to cut their own fuel, and in 1852 had to travel as far as a mile to gather the scanty supply.⁶⁰

By 1859 the engineers neared completion of the large masonry fort at Fort Point. An enterprising citizen of San Francisco, A. W. Morris, concluded that the site would be a great place to have a tavern. Not only the civilian workmen at the fort but curious visitors from San Francisco would enjoy refreshments. He secured the signatures of 500 citizens who supported this concept and forwarded the petition to a contact in Washington, D. C. When the request "to erect a small house" reached the War Department, Secretary of War John B. Floyd passed it on to the Engineer Department for comment. The response came back that such an establishment would be a serious injury to public service. Secretary Floyd granted permission, however. The engineers continued to object and in the spring of 1860 the secretary reversed his decision and Morris' plan was doomed. One citizen did obtain access to the reservation. Captain Keyes recalled, "I permitted a man to fence a piece of ground to the west of the Presidio [i.e., to the west of the post], and to cultivate it as a garden, on shares, for the garrison." The soil was rich and with the addition of a little water, it produced a bountiful crop.⁶¹

The number of officers at the Presidio during the 1850s varied in number from one to eight, but most often was four or five. Several of them acted as post commander during Keyes' absences. Principal among them were Capt. Charles S. Merchant, who filled in from August 1851 to September 1852, and in 1859–1860 after Keyes had transferred, Lt. Horatio G. Gibson at various times after 1856, and Lt. John H. Lendrum at times in 1857–1858. All three were 3d Artillery. Other officers of note included gruff-looking Capt. Edward O. C. Ord, 3d Artillery, a company officer who in a few years would rise to major general during the Civil War, and Post Surg. Robert Murray, who had served in the 1st New York Volunteers and who became

the surgeon general of the U.S. Army, 1883–1886. Capt. Lewis A. Armistead, 6th Infantry, served at the Presidio of San Francisco briefly in 1858–1859. He joined the Confederate Army in 1861 and in 1862 became a brigadier general. On the third day of the battle of Gettysburg, July 1863, Armistead led his troops in “Pickett’s Charge” on Cemetery Ridge. Mortally wounded, he fell within Union lines, at the spot marking the “high tide of the Confederacy.”

When the 3d Artillery suffered its disaster at sea in 1853, wives and children of officers and sergeants were on board the sinking ship. But army regulations at that time did not recognize the existence of wives, only laundresses, and no accounts of their presence at the Presidio have yet been found. Later accounts showed that Presidio families greatly enjoyed San Francisco’s social and cultural life. Bachelor officers also found San Francisco’s society a delightful adventure. Lt. James Birdseye McPherson, stationed on lonely Alcatraz Island, wrote a friend describing New Year’s Eve in San Francisco: “Knowing that you are interested in the Ladies I must tell you that the hauties of San Francisco were there, admired with more, than the Queen of Sheba, when she made her appearance at the Court of Solomon — am I right — ever desirous of — Silks & Satins, laces and head dresses, gas-light and diamonds, all tended to produce almost dazzling effect, from which I am happy to say I suffered no serious inconveniences.”⁶²

An inspector general in 1852 found the Presidio’s officers to be “well acquainted with their duties, and appear to discharge them with zeal.” Two years later another visitor noted that Lieutenant Lendrum, then acting commanding officer, was “an ambitious and meritorious young officer,” but he had too many responsibilities, more than one man could handle.⁶³ Overworked and underpaid, the junior officers survived the raging inflation and California’s growing pains. Many of them took up outside enterprises in order to make ends meet. Some, like Folsom, grew rich by investing in real estate. A few others, such as Capt. George Crook, 4th Infantry, supplemented income by farming.⁶⁴ Sherman resigned from the Army and returned to San Francisco as a banker.

Captain Keyes supplemented his income in several ways. Soon after his arrival in San Francisco he received \$500 for designing a city wharf. He also invested in real estate, but lost nearly everything in the great fire of 1851. Not discouraged, he later acquired a rich piece of property on Montgomery Street, San Francisco’s future financial district.

All of them found the city intriguing. Crook, on his first arrival in 1852, observed the conglomeration of frame buildings and the streets deep in sand. Everything was excitement and bustle, he said, and prices exorbitant. Common laborers had higher incomes than army officers. Ulysses S. Grant, en route to Fort Jones in northern California, witnessed a similar scene that year. But when he returned to San Francisco just two years later, he wrote: "Gambling houses had disappeared from public view. The city had become staid and orderly." General Hitchcock contributed to the growing city when he moved down from Benicia. He sold most of his 2,000-volume personal library to the city. It became the basis for the Mercantile Library Association. Lieutenant McPherson penned his observations in 1858:

San Francisco beats all the cities I have ever been in, in the way of Drinking Saloons, Billiard Tables, Cigar Stores and idle men "loafers" genteelly dressed, and if you accidentally to make an acquaintance of one of them, before you are aware of it, you will be introduced to any number more — for they have the greatest way of introducing folk I have ever seen.⁶⁵

The Presidio itself changed but little as the 1850s came to a close. A reporter from the *Alta California* rode out to the reservation on a fine fall day in 1857:

At the corner of Washington and Pacific streets, he boarded one of Bowman & Gardner's four-horse omnibuses. A 40-minute ride through Spring Valley, past the toll-gate, along the marge of Washerwoman's Bay, and by a number of ranches, brought the conveyance to the end of its route to Presidio House [a place of refreshment just outside the reservation boundary near the Lombard Street gate]. Disembarking, the reporter continued on foot, passing to the north of the Presidio. Only a few of the old adobe structures were occupied by the army. Nearby were the new wooden buildings. To the south, the traveler caught a glimpse of the "famed Mountain Lake Water Co.," and a road leading over the hills to Lone Mountain Cemetery. A 20-minute walk along a "fair road" built by the military brought the reporter to the [engineer] wharf [at Fort Point].⁶⁶

Military Operations, 1850s

The California gold rush almost inevitably brought clashes between the Indians and miners. In 1848–1849 the Presidio's tiny garrison could do little as peacemaker. One early clash occurred in the Coloma area east of Sutter's Fort in 1849 where miners and Indians retaliated against each other. That fall Lt. William Warner, who had surveyed the Presidio reservation, set out on an exploring expedition searching for a railway route. Pit River Indians



"Washerwoman's Bay in 1858." View from Russian Hill with the Presidio of San Francisco in the distance. The fort at Fort Point, far right, is still under construction. "Strawberry Island" is also at right. Washerwoman's Lagoon was at today's Greenwich and Octavia Streets. *Carleton E. Watkins photograph, California State Library.*

Enlargement of the Presidio of San Francisco from the previous photograph. A semaphore station stands on top of the treeless hills. *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS*



ambushed him near Goose Lake in northeastern California in September. During the winter of 1849–1850, Indians in the vicinity of Clear Lake, 90 miles north of San Francisco, killed wandering prospectors. The deaths of Warner and the others led the Army to take action in the spring of 1850. Lt. Nathaniel Lyon, 2d Infantry (not a Presidio officer), led a force of dragoons and infantry — first to Clear Lake, shooting down from 60 to 100 Indians, possibly Pomos, then to the nearby Russian River where the soldiers killed upwards of 150 more. In July another army expedition clashed with Pit River people in an effort to avenge the death of Lieutenant Warner. Presidio troops did not take part in these engagements.⁶⁷

Because the Army was quite ineffectual in the miner-Indian clashes, white citizens organized themselves into military bands. One such outfit was the "Mariposa Battalion" which marched into the Sierra Nevada in 1851. While it had limited success in killing Indians, it did discover the magnificent Yosemite Valley.⁶⁸

In May 1851 Captain Keyes led a large infantry escort for Indian Commissioner John McKee, Dr. O. M. Woozencroft, and a Mr. Barbour to inland California to deal with various groups of Indians. Part of the commission turned north and traveled up the Sacramento River. Keyes remained with the other portion journeying through the San Joaquin Valley southward all the way to Los Angeles. On this trip, the captain gave up tobacco forever and enjoyed the otherwise uneventful journey.⁶⁹

Closer to home, the army post at the Golden Gate at last received a name. Until 1850, the returns had been headed "Post Return of San Francisco, California," although the locals freely referred to the post as the Presidio. Also, President Fillmore in his executive order of November 1850 referred to the reservation as the Presidio. The August 1851 return, however, proudly displayed the headline, "Post Return of the Presidio of San Francisco, Cal.," and the remarks section noted that War Department General Orders† 34, June 25, 1851, had "made changes in the names of certain posts."⁷⁰

Col. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, commanding the Division of the Pacific, moved his headquarters from Benicia to San Francisco in June 1852. He had already visited the Presidio where he "listened with delight to the surf breaking on the rocks below — relief from the everlasting talk about 'property', 'water lots', etc. Great God!" In the following year he learned that one William Walker was organizing a filibustering expedition in San Francisco to overthrow the Mexican government in neighboring Sonora. President Fillmore had ordered Hitchcock to



Presidio of San Francisco surveyed by A. F. Rodgers, 1857. Note the buildings and roads of the Presidio; post gardens to the southwest; two dams or water impoundments near El Polin Spring; tidal marsh to the north; and, outside the reservation to the east, "Washerwoman's Lagoon" and "Cow Hollow." *Presidio Army Museum Photographic Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS*

prevent such undertakings. Now, U.S. District Attorney S. W. Inge advised him to seize *Arrow*, a vessel that was being outfitted for a large number of passengers and arms. Hitchcock ordered Captain Keyes to take his Presidio troops to seize the brig. Keyes did so on September 30. Walker then claimed the ship and its cargo and a crowd of citizens threatened to take back the vessel by force. Hitchcock told the soldiers to move *Arrow* out in the stream. That done, the troops withdrew from the vessel on October 4. Politics entered the picture and the new Secretary of War Jefferson Davis directed Hitchcock to cease his activities. Shortly thereafter Brig. Gen. John Wool succeeded Hitchcock as division commander, and moved the headquarters back to Benicia. Once again, Keyes and his small band of warriors had plugged a breach. Reflecting on the event, Maj. Edward D. Townsend, Hitchcock's adjutant general, wrote, "One result has certainly been that filibusters now go & come as they chose, and no one cares a straw."⁷¹

Captain Keyes reconnoitered the newly established Nome Lackee Indian reservation in northern California in the fall of 1854. He selected a camp site for a detachment of 3d Artillery soldiers that marched there in January 1855. Keyes revisited the camp in July 1855 when Lt. John Edwards, Company B, 3d Artillery, commanded the outpost. A Presidio officer, Lt. John H. Lendrum, commanded the Nome Lackee detachment in June 1857, and from then until March 1858 Lt. Michael R. Morgan, 3d Artillery and formerly stationed at the Presidio, commanded the detachment.⁷²

In November 1855 Keyes and Company M, 3d Artillery, received orders to proceed to the Pacific Northwest on detached service where several native tribes had taken up arms both east and west of the Cascade Range. In the spring of 1856 the "War of Puget Sound" was fought and quickly ended. When a large force of Klikitats attacked a company of the 9th Infantry, Keyes' Company M counterattacked. At a cost of two men killed and eight wounded, M Company scattered the Indians. Other fights occurred in the Pacific Northwest throughout much of that year. Keyes and his men, now experienced in combat, reached their Presidio home in October.⁷³

The artillerymen had almost 20 months to revisit their favorite San Francisco haunts. In April 1857 they left San Francisco by steamer, ascended the Sacramento River, and proceeded to Fort Jones west of Yreka. Hardly had they reached their destination when they were ordered to return to their Presidio barracks. It must have been a pleasant excursion, and at government expense. Lt. Horatio G. Gibson led a detachment from Company M, 3d Artillery, from the Presidio to northern California where he established Camp Bragg on the Mendocino Indian reservation on the coast in June 1857. In September Gibson received permission to rename the post Fort Bragg. The detachment remained on the reservation for one year. In June 1858 Gibson and his men returned to the Presidio. A month earlier Captain Keyes had announced that Company M would return to Washington Territory where the Army had suffered a serious blow on the Columbia plateau when a combined Indian force had defeated Maj. E. J. Steptoe and his large command.⁷⁴

At the settlement of The Dalles and at Fort Walla Walla, Col. George Wright organized a command to march north toward the Spokane country near the Canadian border to avenge Steptoe. There a combined force of Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Palouse, and other Indians awaited the bluecoats. Wright appointed Keyes to command a battalion of six 3d Artillery companies and made him second in command of the whole force. Other fighters in this cam-

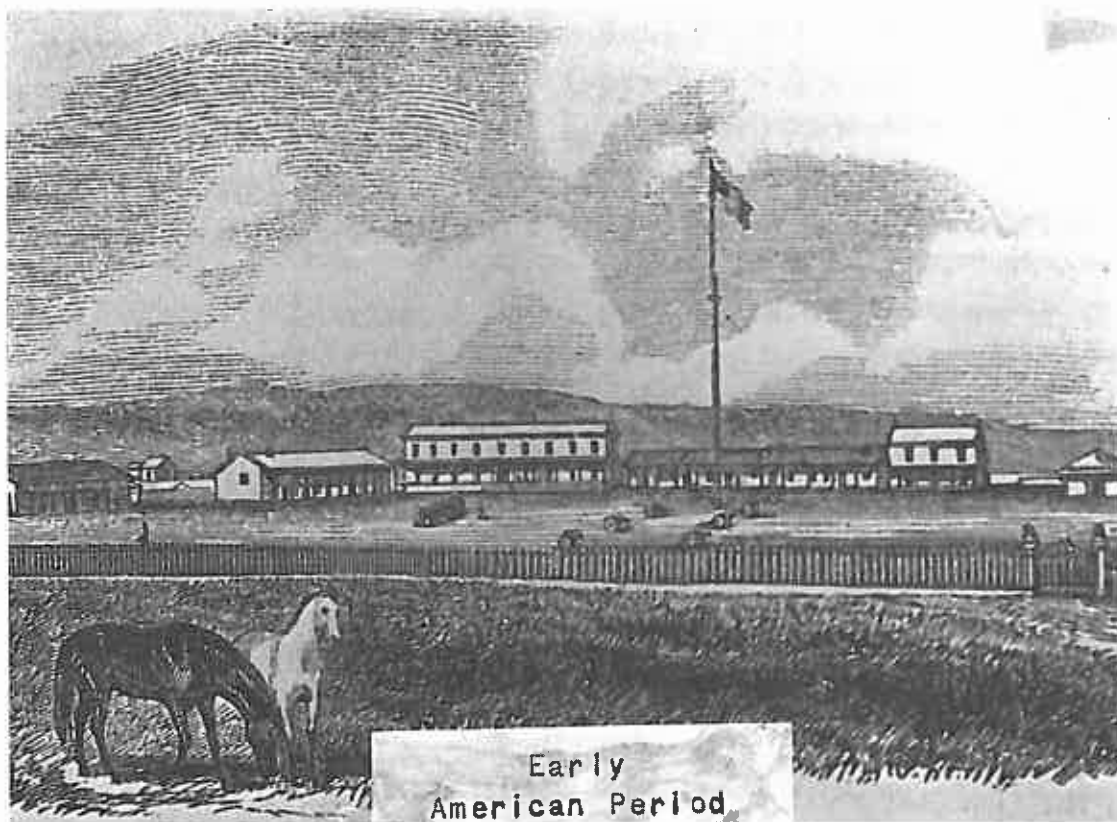
paign included such old Presidio soldiers as E. O. C. Ord and James A. Hardie. The fighting climaxed at the Battle of Four Lakes on September 1, 1858, and the Battle of Spokane Plain a few days later with the defeat of the Indians. Keyes' performance had been outstanding.

Writing later, Keyes mused, "I doubt if in the history of our country there has ever been an Indian campaign in which as much was accomplished at an equal cost. The good result was due to three causes: The proper instruction of the soldiers at the commencement, the excellence of the quartermaster department, and the admirable fitness of our commander, Colonel George Wright." It would not be long before Wright came to San Francisco.⁷⁵

During the campaign Keyes learned that the 6th Infantry Regiment had reached California. He worried that it would garrison the Presidio (it did) and that he would be kept in the Pacific Northwest rather than at "the delightful Presidio." The Army, however, had other plans for him. In October at Fort Vancouver Keyes was promoted to major in the 1st Artillery Regiment with orders to report to Fort Monroe, Virginia. The icing on the cake was a year's leave that he spent in San Francisco.⁷⁶ The record is less clear as to the disposition of Company M. It probably formed a part of the large military escort that accompanied Lt. John Mullan, who constructed a military road from Fort Benton on the Missouri to Fort Walla Walla from 1859 to 1862.

Keyes did not reach Fort Monroe. In October 1859, the general-in-chief of the Army, Winfield Scott, visited San Francisco. Keyes, a former aide-de-camp to the old man, called on the general and dined with him at San Francisco's finest, the Oriental Hotel. Keyes left San Francisco in December and again visited General Scott in New York City where he learned that he was to be the general's military secretary. In that position he would again play a role in California's military history.

Following the departure of Company M, the Presidio's garrison fluctuated as recruits and organizations came and went. Two companies of the 6th Infantry occupied the post early in 1859, then left temporarily to join the Colorado Expedition in the vicinity of Yuma. Both companies transferred from the Presidio in June and July 1859 and the Presidio again became an artillery post with the arrival of the 3rd Artillery's headquarters, Lt. Col. Charles S. Merchant commanding, in July. Companies H and I joined in October. (The new fort at Fort Point was nearing completion.)⁷⁷



Presidio of San Francisco, circa 1859. View toward the west. The two-story building toward the left was a wood frame barracks built in 1854. The two-story structure on the right was a wood frame hospital built in 1857. Note the picket fence and gate. *From Hutchings' California Magazine (June 1859), U.S. Army Military History Institute.*

March 17, 1860 witnessed a unique event when the first Japanese ship, *Kanrin Maru*, ever to enter the Golden Gate sailed into view. She bore the first Japanese minister to the United States, Shimmi Buzen-no-Kami, and a party of Japanese nobles. Either the Presidio's or Alcatraz's guns, or perhaps both, thundered the appropriate salute. An engineer's report a few days later read, "Ammunition used for salute to Japanese Embassy: 105 lbs. powder, 42 pr. cart. bags, 18 friction primers."⁷⁸

Before 1860 ended, Army troops were called out once more to fight in the Paiute War. As before, clashes led to violence between miners and settlers and the Paiutes in the Great Basin — then Utah Territory, which in 1861 became Nevada Territory. Army units from the Bay Area traveled eastward, but only a small detachment came from the Presidio — 2 officers and 11 men from Companies I and M, 3d Artillery, armed with two howitzers. The Battle of Pinnacle

Mount was declared a draw. Following the action, some of the regulars marched to the Big Bend of the Carson River and established a new fort named Churchill.⁷⁹

A fitting close to this decade of the Presidio's history occurred around 1860 when a visitor rode out to the post:

To-day I took a California horse of the old style — the run, the loping gait — and visited the Presidio. The walls stand as they did, with some changes made to accommodate a small garrison of United States troops. It has a noble situation, and I saw from it a clipper ship of the very largest class, coming through the Gate, under her fore-and-aft sails. Thence I rode to the Fort, now nearly finished, on the southern shore of the Gate, and made an inspection of it.

The visitor knew about ships. He had been to San Francisco before and had written a book about it. He called it *Two Years Before the Mast*, for he was Richard Henry Dana.⁸⁰

Chapter 2 Notes:

1. Not for twenty more years or so would headquarters be established at the Presidio itself, where it would remain for a decade. [U.S. Army], *Outline Descriptions, Military Posts in the Military Division of the Pacific* (1879); Francis Paul Prucha, *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, 1789-1895* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), pp. 145-51; Grivas, *Military Governments*, pp. 135-137 and 148. The above outline is "bare bones." Each reorganization involved changing geographical boundaries, mergers, inclusions, exclusions, and responsibilities.
2. Sherman did not live at the Presidio, but his horse did. Wrote Brig. Gen. Persifor Smith, "You will please cause a government horse, now in charge of 1st Lieutenant W. T. Sherman, 3d Artillery, acting assistant adjutant general, to be foraged and kept for Lieutenant Sherman's service at the Presidio of San Francisco." Smith, March 7, 1849, to Capt. J. L. Folsom, in House Executive Document 17, p. 715.
3. William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman* (New York, 1891), p. 32; Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field, Diary of Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, USA*, ed. W. A. Crofutt (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 395; *San Francisco Directory*, 1853 and 1863; Robert W. Frazer, ed., *Mansfield on the Condition of the Western Forts, 1853-54* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 125-127; *Colville's San Francisco Directory*, 1856-57. Sherman held a low opinion of the town, writing "a more desolate region it was impossible to conceive of." His superior, Brig. Gen. Persifor Smith, thought it worse, noting that "The town of San Francisco is in no way fitted for military or commercial purposes; there is no harbor, a bad landing place, bad water, no supplies of provisions, an inclement climate, and it is cut off from the rest of the country." Smith, April 5, 1849, to the adjutant general, Washington, in House Executive Document 17, p. 717.
4. Keyes graduated from West Point in 1836 and became an artillery officer. Recognized early as possessing leadership qualities, he had reached the rank of colonel on the eve of the Civil War. Before he came to the Presidio he had served as an aide-de-camp to Gen. Winfield Scott, among other assignments. Early in the Civil War he did duty as General Scott's military secretary, then as a major general of volunteers. Keyes resigned from the Army in 1864 following criticism for lacking initiative while the Battle of Gettysburg raged. He settled in San Francisco and engaged in mining and viticulture. Keyes died in 1895 while traveling in France. Heitman, *Historical Register*; Robert McHenry, ed. *Webster's American Military Biographies* (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam, 1878), p. 216; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York: Facts on File, 1988), pp. 361-362; E. D. Keyes, *Fifty Years' Observation of Men and Events, Civil and Military* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), p. 228.

5. Post Returns, May–August 1849; Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 194.
6. Mason, August 17, 1848, in House Executive Document 17, p. 534; Utey, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 100 and 100n; Leonard L. Lerwill, *The Personnel Replacement System in the United States Army* (Washington, 1954), p. 63. Veterans of the Mexican War received an additional \$2 per month. In 1854 a private's pay increased from \$7 to \$11 per month.
7. Richards, *Historic San Francisco*, p. 78.
8. Capt. E. D. Keyes, July 10, 1852, to Maj. O. Cross, quartermaster, Land Records, OCE, RG 77, NA; Keyes, *Fifty Years*, p. 292; House Executive Document 17, p. 927.
9. President Millard Fillmore, Executive Order, November 6, 1850, and amendment, December 31, 1851; and Capt. J. L. Folsom, June 23, 1848, to Gen. Bennett Riley, PSF, Land Papers, OCE, RG 77, NA; Erwin N. Thompson, *Seacoast Fortifications, San Francisco Harbor, Golden Gate National Recreation Area* (Denver: NPS, 1979), pp. 20–22.
10. E. D. Keyes, Statement, no date, recorded in OCE, 1871, Land Papers; Keyes, November 1, 1849, and January 19 and July 31, 1850, to E. R. S. Canby, Bulky File, all in OCE, RG 77, NA. Keyes made the above statement circa 1871 when a resident of San Francisco. It turned out his line was not parallel to Lyon Street although it began there; it ended up on the edge of the bay near the foot of Broderick Street. This boundary was later adjusted. The cannon was near the present intersection of Lyon Street and Pacific Avenue.
11. Maj. H. G. Gibson, Fort Wadsworth, New York, March 29, 1880, to chief of engineers, PSF, Land Papers, OCE, RG 77, NA; Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 136, writes: "American settlers refused to become contented peasants. Throughout the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, squatter violence was commonplace."
12. Agreement between Folsom and George F. Sweeney, June 4, 1851; and Gilmer, June 18, 1859, to Engineer Department, Washington, Bulky File, OCE, RG 77, NA. At that time the engineers planned to construct redoubts on the hill as a defense for the new fort from land attack. Actually, the hill became the site of a rock quarry. The Army's present name of Rob Hill came from its having been the site of a Coast and Geodetic Survey station by that name.
13. Edwards, *California Diary of Townsend*, p. 64.
14. R. W. Allen, March 15, 1855, to Maj. O. Cross, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.
15. E. S. Capron, an extract from his *History of California, from its discovery to the present time* (Boston, 1854), in Chappell, *The Presidio of San Francisco*, p. 74.
16. Inspector General George A. McCall, May 25, 1852, report of inspection, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780–1917, RG 94, NA.
17. Sketch of the Presidio of San Francisco, 111-SC-91387, Still Picture Branch, NA.
18. Capt. E. D. Keyes, January 1, 1854, to Maj. R. Allen.
19. E. D. Townsend, May 8, 1854, Special Orders 42, both in CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.
20. Frazer, ed., *Mansfield*, pp. 135–136.
21. This structure remains at the Presidio. Incorporated in the front portion of the Presidio officers' club [50], it has a long illustrious history. At the time of the report the Presidio had two additional officers, Surg. C. H. Lamb and Captain Allen, who lived in the city.
22. Four laundresses were authorized for each company. Some were married to soldiers; some were not. They received food rations and straw bedding (officers' wives received nothing). The position of laundress was abolished in 1878. This building also had a history: parts of it later became comfortable officers' quarters that lasted until the 1906 earthquake.

23. Allen, May 15, 1855, OQMG, RG 92, NA.
24. The National Historic Landmark plaque on today's building 2 misidentifies the 1864 general hospital building as the 1857 post hospital. After 1864 the old 1857 building served other functions before being demolished in the 1870s or 1880s.
25. Dimmick, Diary, May 7, 1848; Col. R. B. Mason, September 18, 1847; October 7, 1847; and August 23, 1848, all to the adjutant general, U.S. Army; Brig. Gen Persifor F. Smith, March 6, 1849, to Mason; and March 15, 1849, to the adjutant general, U.S. Army, all five letters in House Executive Document. 17, pp. 338, 356, 601, 711, and 714.
26. Halleck, January 31, 1852, to Totten; Col. I. L. Smith, March 3, 1852, to Totten; and Lt. William H. Whiting, September 15, 1853, to Totten, all in Letters Received, 1838–1866; Capt. James L. Mason, July 15, 1853, to Totten, PSF, Land Papers, all in OCE, RG 77, NA.
27. George Tays, "Castillo de San Joaquin, Registered Landmark #82," California Historical Landmarks Series, Vernon Aubrey Neasham, editor (Berkeley, 1936).
28. Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846–1856, From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 182–183; *Alta California*, October 11, 1852, May 13 and August 12, 1853, and August 7, 1857; James P. Delgado, "The Bensley Water System: The Politics, Planning, and Construction of San Francisco's First Water System" (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Recreation Area, 1980), pp. 1–3.
29. G. M. Wheeler, map, "Presidio of San Francisco, 1870," RG 77, NA; Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 231.
30. *Alta California*, December 6, 1859.
31. H. G. Wright, September 1, 1856, to DeRussy; DeRussy, December 19, 1856, to secretary of war, in "Fort Point and Presidio Reservation, 1845," Bulky File, OCE, RG 77, NA; Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 121–122.
32. U.S. Engineer Department, November 30, 1857, to secretary of war, Bulky File, OCE, RG 77, NA.
33. *Alta California*, February 16, 1860 and July 1861.
34. O. W. Degen, "Development of the San Francisco Water Supply System, Part 1 — Original Sources," unidentified newspaper clipping, General Correspondence Geographical File (GCGF), OQMG, RG 92, NA.
35. Delgado, "The Bensley Water System," p. 4.
36. Roger E. Kelly, *Archaeological Resources of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area* (San Francisco: NPS, 1976), p. 61.
37. O. F. Long, August 18, 1896, to commanding officer, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.
38. Totten, December 11, 1862, to DeRussy, Letters to Engineer Officers, OCE, RG 77, NA.
39. Delgado, "The Bensley Water System," pp. 7–8.
40. Elliot, June 9, 1869, to Humphreys, Land Papers, OCE, RG 77, NA.
41. U.S. Army, *Outline Descriptions of Military Posts in the Military Division of the Pacific*, 1879, p. 91.
42. W. H. French, January 29, 1878, to Department of California, PSF, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA.
43. J. S. Oyster, December 29, 1887, to Department of California, CCF, OQMG, RG 92, NA. Oyster also mentioned two other windmills on the reservation — the one near the 1st Avenue (Arguello) gate, and one near the southeast corner of the reservation that drew water from a "pond or catchment basin." Both provided water for irrigation and road sprinkling.
44. Post quartermaster, September 8, 1888, to commanding officer, PSF, Register of Letters Received; Post adjutant, March 19, 1891, to post surgeon; and W. Graham, August 12, 1892, to officer in charge, Marine Hospital, Letters Sent, PSF, RG 393, NA.

45. Post quartermaster, August 31 and November 10, 1883, to commanding officer, PSF; Graham, November 10, 1893, to Department of California, PSF, RG 393, NA; Harts, *Report*, p. 23. Spring Valley then depended on Crystal Springs and San Andreas lakes to the south for city water.
46. Post quartermaster, July 2 and November 3, 1894; Assistant adjutant general Department of California, October 22, 1894, to commanding officer; PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.
47. O. W. Degen, "Water Supply System," RG 92, NA; Harts, *Report*, p. 20. It is not clear if the Army had planned to tunnel clear through Presidio Hill. The piping system for the new reservoir remains an unknown factor. Post quartermaster, July 10, 1894, to commanding officer, PSF, Register of Letters Received, RG 393, NA.
48. Chief quartermaster, Department of California, May 9, 1898, to chief surgeon, Register of Letters Received, PSF, RG 393, NA. Another problem occurred a year later: a city sewer emptied directly into the lake.
49. Commanding officer, PSF, April 4, 1900, to Department of California, Letters Sent, RG 393, NA; Harts, *Report*, p. 25.
50. U.S. Army, *Outline Description of Military Post and Reservations in the United States and Alaska* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904); Commanding officer, Company D, 21st Infantry, December 25, 1904, to commanding officer, PSF, Register of Letters Received, PSF, RG 393, NA.
51. U.S. Army, *Annual Report, War Department 1907*, 3:185; Harts, *Report*, pp. 39–40.
52. PSF, Circular 26, June 28, 1909, PSF Circulars 1909, RG 393, NA; NPS, National Register Forms, pp. 7–107 and 7–108.
53. F. Von Schrader, June 2, 1911, to adjutant general, Department of California; J. B. Aleshire, August 22, 1912, to chief of staff, U.S. Army, PSF, General Correspondence, OQMG, RG 92, NA.
54. Extract from "Military Reservations — California," April 20, 1940, Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association; J. L. Shepard, July 1, 1924, Annual Sanitary Report, PSF; G. L. Hicks, July 29, 1931, both in PSF, GCGF, OQMG, RG 92, NA.
55. U.S. Army, *Final Environmental Impact Statement*, pp. 3–23 to 3–25 and 3–40.
56. Eve Iverson, quoting from Adams. "Water Supply at the Presidio of San Francisco," *California Geology* (December 1989), p. 270.
57. William Addleman Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), p. 235; Coffman, *The Old Army*, p. 124. More than 200 people died in the disaster. According to Coffman, the regimental commander, Col. William Gates, was one of the first to leave the stricken ship and was later suspended from command. Gates, however, remained on active duty until 1863, still in charge of the 3d Artillery.
58. Capt. J. G. Barnard, June 2, 1854, to Wool, Letters Received 1838–1866, OCE, RG 77, NA. A "History of the Presidio of San Francisco," prepared by Sixth U.S. Army, no date, erroneously concluded that the closure did take place and Company M transferred to the Pacific Northwest in 1854.
59. Coffman, *The Old Army*, pp. 138, 152–154, and 165; I. G. George A. McCall, May 25, 1852, to Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott, Letters Received, M391, 1852, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917, RG 94, Microcopy 567, Roll 468, NA.
60. McCall, May 25, 1852.
61. Summary of correspondence, 1859–1860 in "Fort Point & Presidio Reservation," Bulky File, OCE, RG 77, NA; Keyes, *Fifty Years*, p. 247.
62. William F. Strobridge, ed., "California Letters of Major General James McPherson, 1858–1860," *Ohio History*, 81: 43–44.
63. McCall, May 26, 1852; Frazer, ed. *Mansfield*, p. 137.

64. Capt. George Crook transferred from Fort Ter-Waw in northern California to the PSF in June 1861. Remaining there but briefly he transferred to the east where he rose to the rank of major general of volunteers in the Union Army. Following the Civil War he engaged in campaigns against the Sioux and Cheyennes, and in Arizona against the Apaches. Major General Crook died on active duty in 1890.
65. George Crook, *General George Crook, His Autobiography*, ed. Martin F. Schmitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 6; E. B. Long, ed., *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, pp. 104–105; Hitchcock, *Fifty Years*, pp. 384 and 398; Strobbridge, "McPherson," 81:38.
66. Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 103.
67. William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 279–280; John Walton Caughey, *California* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), p. 321; Utley, *Frontiersmen In Blue*, pp. 175–176.
68. Caughey, *California*, p. 321; Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, pp. 101 and 175–176.
69. [U.S. Army], *The Army at the Golden Gate, A Guide to Army Posts in the San Francisco Bay Area*. Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program, Works Projects Administration (WPA) [ca. 1940], pp. 14–15; Keyes, *Fifty Years*, p. 232.
70. It has not been possible to read that general order. For whatever reason the U.S. Army decided in 1938 to issue another general order naming the reservation. War Department, General Orders 3, May 24, 1938, "The military reservation situated at the location indicated is named as follows. Presidio of San Francisco, San Francisco, Calif." Chief of Staff Gen. Malin Craig signed the order. Did he perhaps recall his days at the Presidio as a young officer and, later, as a general?
71. Hitchcock, *Fifty Years*, pp. 394–395 and 400; Edwards, ed. *Diary of Townsend*, pp. 91–96; Carl P. Schlicke, *General George Wright, Guardian of the Pacific Coast* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), pp. 103–104.
72. William F. Strobbridge, *Regulars in the Redwoods, The U.S. Army in Northern California, 1852–1861* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark, 1994), pp. 109–113, 140, and 263.
73. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, pp. 191 and 194; Post Returns, November 1855 and October 1856; U.S. Army, War Department, *Annual Report*, December 5, 1857, pp. 51–58.
74. *Alta California*, May 1, 1857; Robert Ignatius Burns, *The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 220–230; Strobbridge, *Regulars in the Redwoods*, pp. 140–143. Strobbridge, n.d., to Gordon Chappell, noted that the Fort Jones post returns made no mention of the Presidio's artillerymen reaching that post.
75. Utley, *Frontiersmen In Blue*, p. 204; Schlicke, *Wright*, pp. 146–175; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, House Ex. Doc. 44, 36th Cong., 2d sess., Report of Lieutenant Mullan, in charge of construction of the military road from Fort Benton to Fort Walla Walla; Burns, *Jesuits and Indian Wars*, pp. 287–289; Keyes, *Fifty Years*, pp. 265–282.
76. Keyes, *Fifty Years*, pp. 284 and 315–316.
77. The whereabouts of the 3d Artillery's colonel, William Gates, at this time is unknown.
78. Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei, The First Americans, The Story of a People* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1992), p. 26; "Register of Materials Received, 1858–1863, April 5, 1860, San Francisco District, OCE, RG 77, NA.
79. Ferol Egan, *Sand in a Whirlwind, The Paiute Indian War of 1860* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 177–179, 213, and 248.
80. Lewis, *This Was California*, p. 155.

CHAPTER 3. A FORT AT FORT POINT, 1853–1868

Military engineers early recognized San Francisco Bay and its rapidly growing city of San Francisco as the most important locations to be defended on the west coast. Overnight, San Francisco had become known worldwide as a port, supply point, and government center because of the discovery of gold in inland California. Its population expanded dramatically in a brief time. The superb harbor could shelter the fleets of the world while the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers allowed steamboats to ascend far into the interior. Because the port was the largest on the coast, the U.S. Navy established a dockyard at Mare Island at the head of San Pablo Bay. This yard contained the only drydock on the Pacific coast of North America. Farther inland, on Carquinez Strait, the U.S. Army located an ordnance depot at Benicia. Both installations, along with San Francisco and its commercial and banking facilities, called for adequate coastal defenses.

International rivalry in Pacific waters in the 1850s and subsequent years also increased the urgency for defense. In 1859 Great Britain and the United States almost came to blows over the ownership of the San Juan Islands lying between the Washington territory and Vancouver Island. As a consequence, the Royal Navy strengthened its Pacific Squadron and established a naval base on Vancouver Island. The American Civil War caused a further deterioration of Anglo-American relations. The *Trent* affair in the fall of 1861, in which confederate commissioners en route to England on a diplomatic mission on board the British merchant ship *Trent* were stopped by the American warship *Jacinto* and the two commissioners were arrested and removed, again strained affairs almost to a breaking point. To the south, France set up a puppet government in Mexico, raising a threat against ships carrying California's treasures to Union coffers. During the war, Confederate raiders in the Pacific menaced San Francisco's security.

Following the war in 1870, the first transcontinental railroad to reach the Pacific terminated in the Bay Area, further increasing San Francisco's strategic importance, and the city evolved into a metropolis as the nineteenth century grew to a close.

The U.S. government first took action to defend the Pacific coast at the beginning of the gold rush in 1849, when it established a joint army and navy commission to plan the future defenses. The commission examined the Bay Area and visited the Columbia River in Oregon

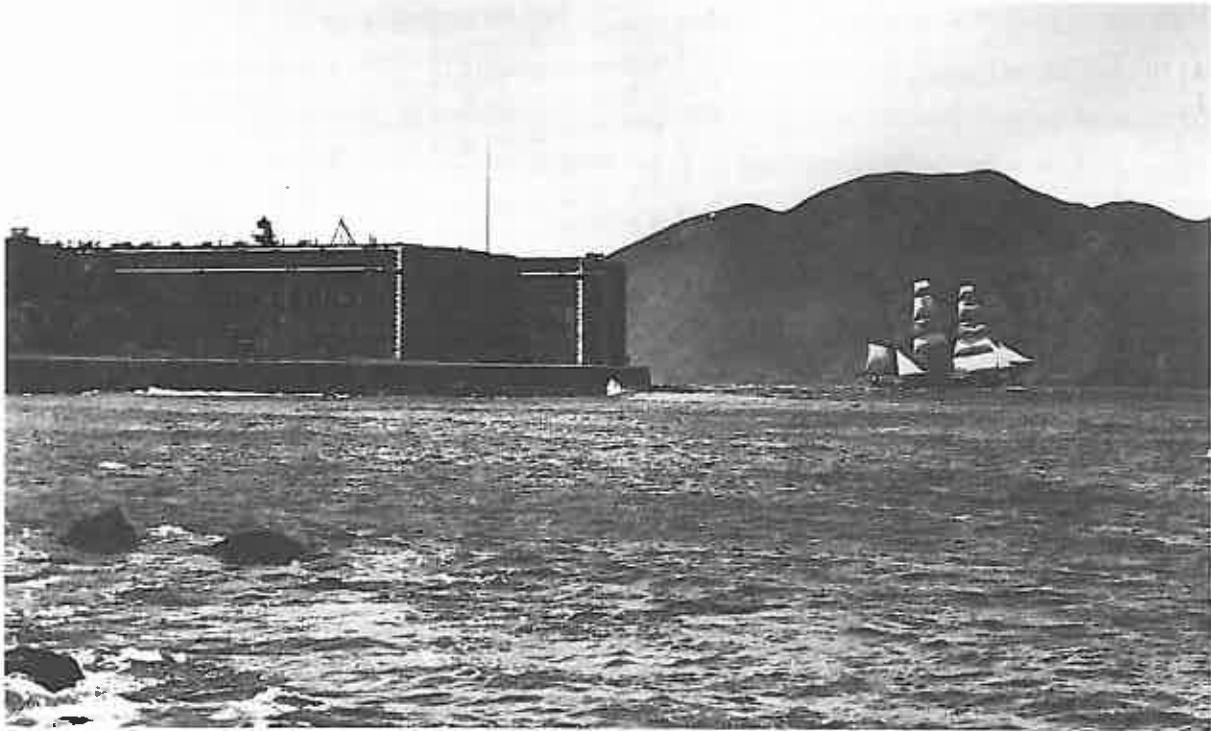
Territory and San Diego in southern California, ignoring Puget Sound for the time being. It concluded that San Francisco was the most important naval and military position on the Pacific coast:

San Francisco Bay is the most important point in the United States on the Pacific. As a naval and military position it must always maintain a controlling influence over other parts of the coast and the interior....Its wealth and the resources incident to it would furnish abundant means for prosecuting war that an intelligent enemy would attempt with all the force at his disposal to get possession of or to destroy or neutralize, if adequate defenses for them should not be provided in time.

While Captain Erasmus Keyes trained his soldiers in the art of war at their humble post, army engineers began their expansive plans for fortifying San Francisco Bay. The Chief of Engineers, Col. Joseph G. Totten, advised the secretary of war that the glorious bay could be defended by three great works: on the promontory on the south side of the Golden Gate, then called Fort Point by Americans, where the old Spanish castillo remained; directly across the Golden Gate at the prominent cliff called Lime Point; and on rocky Alcatraz Island within the bay. Plans for Fort Point called for a large masonry fort with guns on four tiers, similar to existing works in the eastern states. Its future garrison would number 550 officers and men.¹

Plans proceeded for the works at Fort Point and on Alcatraz Island. Construction at Lime Point, however, was delayed for 16 long years because of the federal government's difficulties in acquiring title to the land. This delay heightened the importance of completing the defenses at the other two sites. In addition to having a fort at Fort Point, the Presidio reservation was the only one in the Bay Area sufficiently large for the establishment of a large garrison in time of war. Thus, it proved its great strategic value only a few years later when its Civil War strength reached almost 2,000 men.

Engineer Lt. Col. James L. Mason arrived at San Francisco in 1853. His orders called for him to be the senior engineer officer in charge of construction at Fort Point and the general supervisor of all fortification construction on the Pacific coast. He set to work immediately and assembled a force of carpenters, teamsters, and laborers. The first task involved demolishing the lighthouse, still unlit, that had been erected at the castillo just the year before. Next came the laborious task of reducing the rocky promontory from its elevation of 97 feet to 16 feet above sea level in order to provide a suitable base for the new work.²



Fort Point guarding the Golden Gate. Marin hills are in the background. View to the north. *Presidio Museum Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*

By September 1853 the engineers had erected a wood-frame barracks, with capacity for 40 men, a mess hall, and stables for the civilian workmen, on the bluff about 1,000 feet southeast of the fort site. By that time Mason, who had contracted yellow fever while crossing the Panama isthmus, had become seriously ill. He died on September 5, less than three months after his arrival in California. The work continued and even before the arrival of a new senior engineer, a second barracks, powder magazine, office, and latrine became part of the engineers' compound. A blacksmith shop and a powder magazine stood nearer to the work area, on the neck of the promontory. Additional workers, including masons, blasters, and quarrymen, joined the force and applied themselves in leveling the promontory. The new senior engineer, Maj. John G. Barnard, arrived on the scene on the last day of the year 1853.³

In one of his first reports to Colonel Totten, Barnard wrote, "for the sake of convenience in identifying and in preparing accounts etc. that the name of the old Spanish work San Joaquin be at once given to the new work," or, if that was unacceptable, he recommended Fort Kearny. Other officers would offer other names for the fort, but the War Department continued to refer to the work as "the fort at Fort Point."⁴

Barnard ordered the construction of additional barracks to accommodate 100 laborers and up to 100 additional mechanics. He also directed the construction of a plank road along the foot of the escarpment from the fort site 2,000 feet east, to where he planned to construct a wharf. This 500-foot wharf was completed in June 1854. That summer the engineers' plant at the lower level increased with the addition of a mortar mill, cement storehouse, and cranes at the wharf. Unhappy with his west coast assignment, Major Barnard requested a transfer. It was granted and he returned east in November 1854. His replacement, the experienced Lt. Col. René DeRussy, arrived at San Francisco that same month.⁵

DeRussy and his family found living expenses in San Francisco to be exorbitant. Rent alone took nearly all his income. He wrote to Washington requesting permission to build a house on the military reservation at his own expense, "on the eminence immediately in front of the wharf." The chief of engineers approved the construction of a two-story wood-frame house measuring 26 feet by 30 feet. DeRussy said it would cost him \$2,300 and later he would either sell it to the government or rent it to officers. Washington approved the construction, but with conditions: "it being understood that the government is not expected to purchase the building and it must be removed when desired by the government and must not be sold without the approval of the War Department." Ten years later, when DeRussy lived in the city, the Engineer Department, confused or not, recommended approval of a request from the Department of the Pacific's Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell to purchase "certain buildings on the Government reserve," with a reference to DeRussy.⁶

Because of the unsatisfactory quality of bricks on the commercial market, DeRussy opened his own brickyard in 1855, also on the bluff, and hired brickmakers to carry out the operation. This yard produced satisfactory bricks until it closed in the spring of 1858. Also in 1855 he began construction of a 10-gun battery on the escarpment to the south of the fort. When he learned that additional armament and ordnance supplies were en route, he notified Totten that he would erect temporary buildings to protect the public property. Presumably these structures stood near the wharf. DeRussy also said he would ask that soldiers from the Presidio's Company M, of the 3d Artillery be sent to guard the supplies.⁷

San Franciscan James Mason Hutchings, the future founder of *Hutchings' California Magazine*, visited Fort Point on June 3, 1855:



The fort at Fort Point from the waters of the Golden Gate. Many years later the Golden Gate Bridge would dominate this scene. Guns behind the embrasures defended the harbor entrance. *Presidio Museum Collection, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, NPS.*

Fine, pleasant — breezy in afternoon. From San Francisco to the Presidio, Fort Point, Seal Rock, and back again. This morning Mr. Ayer invited me to take a walk with him toward the Presidio, which I accepted, not expecting to be long away. Went up Pacific street — passed the Lagoon the place of Washerwoman, saw two full-rigged clippers entering the harbor. Passed Fort Point. Here the Government is busy with about 300 [sic] men employed in fortifying the harbor. Several carriages were ready to receive their guns, while a wall of immense thickness covers the embrasures. We sat and listened to the sea, watching the varying tints of the landscape, or gathered wild strawberries in profusion. They are finely flavored and grow on every sandy knoll.⁸

Fort Point acquired a new light in 1855 when the Lighthouse Board had a 52-foot tower and a fifth-order Fresnel light installed on the leveled land immediately to the north of the new fort. The district inspector also had a 1,100-pound machine-operated fog bell installed, as well as quarters for two lighthouse keepers. The quarters stood on the bluff immediately south of the fort.⁹

DeRussy remained at San Francisco for more than two years as the construction proceeded. Not a young man, he soon felt the passage of time and in the fall of 1856 became ill with



Above: The masonry fort at Fort Point, circa 1868. Light keepers' quarters are on and below the bluff to the left of the fort. The white building in the foreground may have been a bakery. View toward the west. (Possibly an Eadweard Muybridge photograph.) *Fort Point National Historic Site.*

Below: View of Fort Point, circa late 1860s-1870s, looking toward the west. *Fort Point National Historic Site.*



tuberculosis. The Presidio's surgeon, Robert Murray, examined the colonel and recommended that DeRussy leave California as soon as possible. A sympathetic Totten readily approved a transfer and DeRussy left San Francisco for the East in March 1857. But momentous events would cause his return a few years later.¹⁰

When Zealous B. Tower took over as senior engineer in the spring of 1857, construction at Fort Point was in full swing. He counted 132 men employed at the fort, including stonemasons, brickmasons, blacksmiths, teamsters, kiln builders, and laborers. It is probable that most lived on the site in the barracks. They all had meals supplied by a government contractor named John Richardson. Major Tower came face to face with a major problem when the men complained that Richardson served them "unwholesome food, odds and ends" collected from the cheapest sources. Tower was slow to react and his labor force threatened to go on strike. He finally took action and canceled Richardson's contract, notifying the men they were now responsible for their own boarding arrangements. The trouble passed. The pace of construction increased and by 1858 about 200 men stopped at the pay table. The records showed that about one-third of them commuted from the city via omnibus. The *Alta California* reported, "Bowman & Gardner's omnibusses run every 2 hours, from the City Hall to the fort in process of construction, passing the Presidio barracks." The stables were practically deserted by then when the engineer sold off most of the livestock that had consisted of four horses, 13 mules, and four oxen.¹¹

Major Tower transferred to the East in the summer of 1858 and after some delay Capt. Jeremy F. Gilmer succeeded him. During the interim Lt. George Washington Custis Lee, eldest son of Col. Robert E. Lee, acted as supervising engineer. A visitor to the fort in 1859 described the scene, "The present beautiful and substantial structure was commenced in 1848 [1853] and is now nearly completed. It is four tiers in height, the topmost of which is 64 feet above low tide; and is capable of mounting 150 guns, including the battery at the back, of 46, 64, and 128 pounders, and during an engagement, can accommodate 2,400 men [!]."¹²

As the fort neared completion by 1860 and work commenced on a large protective seawall, events in the eastern states resulted in the temporary stoppage of construction funds. Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election in November. Southern leaders talked secession. The nation rushed toward civil war. At San Francisco the department commander, Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, who would soon join the Confederacy, took steps to guard federal property.¹³

Colonel Johnston ordered the Presidio's commander, Lt. Col. Charles S. Merchant of the 3d Artillery, to assume general supervision over the fort and to tighten security, even while the engineers worked strenuously to prepare it for occupancy. Merchant directed Capt. John M. Lendrum with three officers and 55 men of Company I to occupy "the Fort at Fort Point" on February 15, 1861. A few days later the Department issued a lengthy list of instructions to Merchant:

1. There must be, 24 hours, 2 sentinels — one at the gate, and one on the barbette battery.
2. When gates are opened or closed it must be under the supervision of the officer of the day, who keeps the keys.
3. The postern gate must never be opened in the morning until the sentinel on the barbette tier† has examined the circuit of the work, nor the main gate be opened until the grounds within musket range are examined by a patrol.
4. When the patrol is absent, the guard must be under arms.
5. Fastenings of lower shutters are to be examined by the officer of the day at retreat.
6. When moving powder and stores from the outer storehouses, the remainder of the garrison must be under arms and properly stationed.
7. No smoking allowed on the parade ground.
8. Men are not allowed on the barbette battery except on duty.
9. Orders will be given to prevent destruction of engineer property.
10. Cartridges will be prepared for flank guns on the land face and placed in the service magazine.
11. The main magazine must never be opened or entered except under the supervision of an officer.
12. Until all guns are mounted for the defense of the ditch, loaded shells must be kept on the land face of the barbette over the main gate.
13. The quartermaster must immediately prepare rough gun racks.
14. The regimental quartermaster is to be placed on duty at the fort until the place is put in order.¹⁴

The fort at Fort Point, circa 1868. The Spring Valley water flume may be seen near the base of the bluffs. The "child" in the foreground is the photographer's dummy. View toward the west. *Eadweard Muybridge photograph, Fort Point National Historic Site.*



A view of the ocean side of Fort Point from the south, circa 1868. Note the water flume. *Eadweard Muybridge photograph, Fort Point National Historic Site.*



These orders illustrated the Army's concerns about a land attack, perhaps by Californians favoring secession. Nevertheless, coastal guns had already been installed in the casemates: 79 heavy guns, two 12-pounder flank howitzers, and five Coehorn mortars. Early in March Companies A and B of the 3d Artillery arrived at San Francisco from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia. They replaced Company I at the fort, that unit transferring to Alcatraz Island. While the garrison strength fluctuated during the next two or three years, an average of five officers and 130 enlisted men manned the fort. The two companies from Fort Vancouver brought their laundresses. These women moved into the former civilian barracks in the engineers' compound on the bluff. In May the engineers allowed the artillery's sutler (name unknown) to occupy a portion of one of their buildings.¹⁵

In April 1861 Brig. Gen. Edwin Sumner replaced Colonel Johnston as commander of the reorganized Department of the Pacific. One of Sumner's first orders called for the separation of the fort from the Presidio: "The several stations in this harbor, viz, Fort Point, Alcatraz island, and the Presidio will be independent of each other."¹⁶

Lisle Lester, the editor of the *Pacific Monthly*, described the fort in May 1864:

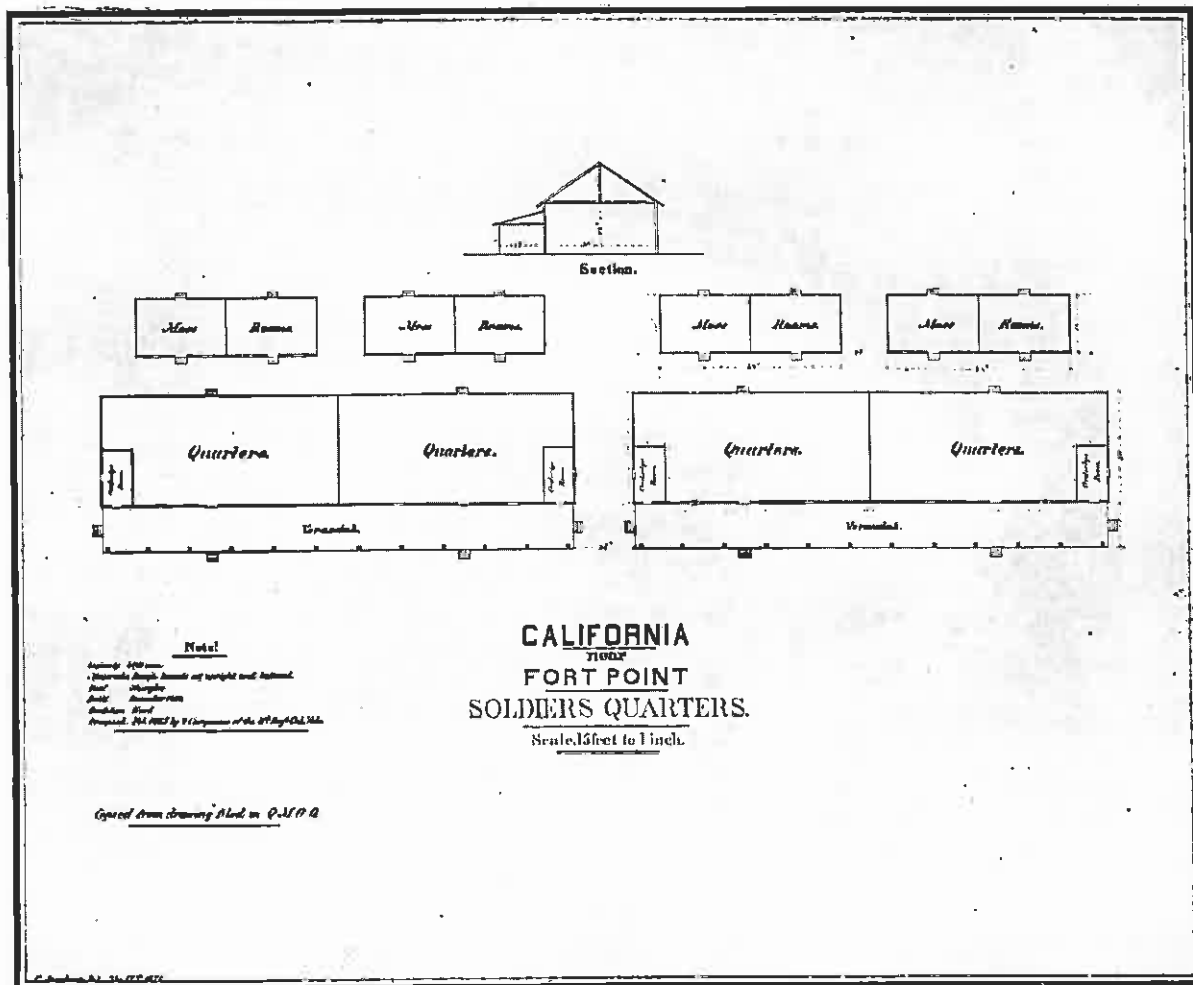
A stone sea wall is now in progress....One [old Spanish gun] is used as a hitching post, while two others are placed as ornaments at the entry....The soldiers are on constant drill, loading and reloading, and kept busy in cleaning the guns, ammunition of the Fort. This Fort is highly romantic in its situation, hugging the great bluff on one side of the narrow passage across to the high rocky steeps [Lime Point] on the other side.

By early 1865 Fort Point's strength had grown to 15 officers and 450 enlisted men. A good part of the increase was caused by the arrival of six companies of California volunteers and their laundresses. For the men, the Quartermaster Department constructed two large, one-story, wood-frame barracks below the bluff and east of the engineers' wharf. Each measured 30 feet by 125 feet and together they had a capacity of 400 men. Four mess rooms stood behind the barracks. The laundresses were not as lucky. They occupied five small shacks 1,500 feet farther east, also below the bluff. Some of the officers occupied quarters on the bluff. The largest of these, measuring 32 feet by 42 feet, located to the south of the wharf, most likely was the former residence, now enlarged, that Colonel DeRussy had constructed in 1855 and which the Army had purchased in February 1865. It now housed the commanding officer of Fort Point. The other two sets measured 32 feet by 38 feet each and stood a short distance to the southeast.¹⁷



Fort Point and the Golden Gate, circa 1865. Guns on the barbette tier had been emplaced by 1861. The lighthouse keepers' residences in the foreground had been erected about 1855. *Fort Point National Historic Site.*

When the war started many officers on the west coast returned to the east, some joining the Union Army, some the Confederate. The shortage of engineer officers in the Bay Area forced General Totten to order Colonel DeRussy to return to San Francisco, where he arrived in November 1861. In addition to undertaking the construction of new fortifications at San Francisco Bay, he oversaw continuing improvements at Fort Point. In September 1863 the Bay Shore and Fort Point Road Company applied to him to construct a macadamized road through the Presidio to Fort Point. DeRussy considered such a road to be of great advantage to Fort Point and since it would not cost the federal government money, he recommended approval. In the spring of 1864 the War Department finally approved the company's request. Although the Bay Shore and Fort Point Road Company proceeded to construct a road from San Francisco toward the Presidio, the road appears to have terminated at or near the Harbor View resort just outside the reservation boundary. The earliest detailed map of that area, prepared by the Army in 1870, shows an unimproved trail in the Presidio that extended from the boundary along the bay shore to join the main road that ran from the Presidio to Fort Point, a trail similar in nature to many others within the Presidio. A few years after the war, when



Plan of Fort Point soldiers' quarters, 1874. *National Archives, Record Group 92*

the Army constructed new fortifications at Fort Point, it became clear that vacationers at Harbor View were not welcome at Fort Point.¹⁸

Another issue that came DeRussy's way, early in 1865, concerned gunpowder. The engineers on the Pacific coast relied on the California Powder Company for their supply of gunpowder for explosive purposes. The chief of engineers asked DeRussy and his associates to report on the advisability of locating a private magazine on public domain. DeRussy replied that "in order to encourage the manufacture by private parties of munitions of war on the Pacific Coast" it would be acceptable to have one or more private magazines erected on the Presidio reservation. Probably because of the winding down of the war, this idea, like the road proposal, died quietly.



The fort at Fort Point constructed between 1853 and 1861. It was armed with cannon by the outbreak of the Civil War. *From Hutchings' California Magazine (June 1859).*

The south side of the Golden Gate got navigation light three during the Civil War. The land on which light two had been located in front of the fort had been eroding, and plans for a seawall further reduced the area. The Lighthouse Board selected a site on top of the fort, above the north stairway. Engineers built a metal tower there and light three was lit in January 1864. The fog bell was moved to a new location at the same time; it was fastened to the outside wall of the fort as was the operating machinery.¹⁹

The American Civil War all but ended in April 1865 at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia. In California Col. René DeRussy's health, long ravaged by disease, steadily declined. Toward the end he was confined to his residence at 41 South Park Street in the city. On November 23, 1865, at the age of 75 years, he died. Fifty-eight years of his life had been in the U.S. Army; 58 years dedicated to the nation's defense.²⁰

Through the war, elements of the 3d Artillery Regiment, 9th Infantry Regiment, and the 8th California Volunteer Infantry had guarded the Golden Gate at Fort Point. Between 1861 and 1865 seven officers served as commander: Capt. John H. Lendrum of the 3d Artillery; Lt. John Kellogg of the 3d Artillery; Capt. William Austine of the 3d Artillery; Capt. James Van Voast of the 9th Infantry; Capt. George P. Andrews of the 3d Artillery; Capt. Joseph Stewart of the 3d Artillery; and Col. Allen L. Anderson of the 8th California Volunteers. All served in the Army honorably. Two regulars reached the rank of colonel: Andrews of the 3d Artillery, in 1882, and Van Voast of the 9th Infantry, also in 1882, both "Presidio regiments."

The post returns for the fort showed the military units and their length of occupancy through the war:

- Company I, 3d Artillery, February–March 1861
- Company A, 3d Artillery, March–May 1861
- Company B, 3d Artillery, March 1861–September 1863
- Company G, 3d Artillery, May–October 1861
- Company K, 9th Infantry, December 1861–February 1863
- Company I, 9th Infantry, February–July 1863
- Company H, 3d Artillery, July 1863–August 1865
- Company I, 9th Infantry, October 1863–December 1864
- Company A, 8th Infantry, California, November 1864–February 1865
- Company B, 8th Infantry, California, December 1864–April 1865
- Company E, 9th Infantry, December 1864–September 1865
- Company C, 8th Infantry, California, January–October 1865
- Company D, 8th Infantry, California, January–October 1865
- Company K, 8th Infantry, California, February–October 1865
- Company I, 8th Infantry, California, April 1865
- Company I, 9th Infantry, May–September 1865

By the end of 1865 the fort's armament had increased to 96 guns: 80 heavy, mounted; 11 heavy, unmounted; and five heavy Mexican trophies.²¹

The strength of the post gradually declined as elements of the 2d Artillery Regiment replaced the wartime troops. Then, in September 1867, Company D, Battalion of Engineers, arrived from New York, replacing the artillery. This outfit of three officers and about 120 men remained at Fort Point until March 1868. That month the company transferred to Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay. The Department of California issued orders annexing "the Post of Fort Point" to the Presidio of San Francisco.²²

3. Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 20-21 and 28.
4. Barnard, January 31, 1854, to Totten, Letters Received 1838-1866, OCE, RG 77, NA. In the beginning the fort did not receive a formal name. Not until 1882 did the War Department cut orders naming the fortification Fort Winfield Scott in honor of the American leader during the Mexican War. War Department, General Orders 133, November 25, 1882. The public, however, then and since has simply called the work Fort Point.
5. Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 47, 49, and 58-59.
6. DeRussy, March 9, 1855, to Totten, Letters Received 1838-1866, OCE; Engineer Department, May 25, 1855, to DeRussy, and February 3, 1865, to secretary of war, both in "Fort Point and Presidio Reservation," Bulky File, all in RG 77, NA.
7. DeRussy, July 14, 1855, to Totten, Letters Received, 1836-1866, OCE, RG 77, NA; Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 63 and 73.
8. James Mason Hutchings, Diary, entry for June 3, 1855, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. From a typed copy by Cosie Hutchings Mills. Historian Peter Palmquist, San Francisco, is currently editing the diary. The number of men employed at that time probably was less than 150.
9. Holland, *America's Lighthouses*, pp. 157-159; Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 94.
10. Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 95-96; Asst. Surg. Robert Murray, January 4, 1857, Letters Received 1838-1866, OCE, RG 77, NA.
11. Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 107, 118, and 148; *Alta California*, June 10, 1858.
12. R. R. Olmsted, ed., *Scenes of Wonder & Curiosity from Hutchings' California Magazine, 1856-1861* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1962), p. 84.
13. Back in Washington, Keyes, now a lieutenant colonel and military secretary to the aged Gen. Winfield Scott, attended a meeting with Scott and Secretary of State William H. Seward. Seward told the others that U.S. Senator J. W. Nesmith from Oregon had informed him that Johnston was unfaithful to the Union. Scott decided to replace him. Keyes, anxious to return to the west coast to check on his real estate investments, hoped that he would be sent to California to investigate the matter. Such was not to be. Brig. Gen. Edwin V. Sumner departed for San Francisco. Although Johnston wished to join the Confederate Army, he carried out his duties at San Francisco with honor until relieved. See Robert J. Chandler, "The Mythical Johnston Conspiracy Revisited: An Educated Guess," *The Californians* 4(1986): 36-41; Keyes, *Fifty Years*, p. 420.
14. Assistant adjutant general W. W. Mackall, Department of California, February 18, 1861, to Lt. Col. C. S. Merchant in U.S. Congress, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (ORs)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 50, part 1, p. 446.
15. Post Returns, the Fort at Fort Point, 1861-1862, Roll 943, Microcopy 617, NA; Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 152-155. Once again, Keyes influenced policy. On January 14, 1861, he urged General Scott to order the two Fort Vancouver companies to San Francisco. Scott did so a few days later. Keyes, *Fifty Years*, pp. 353 and 355.
16. Special Orders 88, Department of the Pacific, May 23, 1861, ORs, Series 1, Vol. 50, part 1, p. 448.
17. Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 202 and 202n. Other structures in the vicinity of the wharf at this time included a stable, kitchens, ordnance yard, and other small structures. An 1865 map of the area has not been located. An excellent map of the Presidio prepared in 1870 locates many of the features.
18. Various correspondence between the Engineer Department and DeRussy from September 14, 1863 to May 3, 1864, "Fort Point and Presidio Reservation, 1845," Bulky File, OCE, RG 77, NA.
19. *Ibid.*, Engineer Department, January 12, 1865, to Board of Engineers for the Pacific Coast; and Board of Engineers, Pacific Coast, January 20, 1865, to the Engineer Department; Bearss, *Fort Point*, pp. 196-197.
20. Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 199; Heitman, *Historical Register*.

21. Post Returns, November 1865. The "Mexican trophies" were probably the ancient Spanish cannon at the Presidio today. Bearss, *Fort Point*, p. 231, lists an 1867 inventory of mounted guns at the fort: six 24-pounders, eleven 32-pounders, thirty-eight 42-pounders, eight 8-inch columbiads, and two 10-inch columbiads.
22. Special Orders 38, Headquarters, Department of California, March 17, 1868, in the Post Returns, March 1868.
23. Erwin N. Thompson, *Seacoast Fortifications*, pp. 80-82.